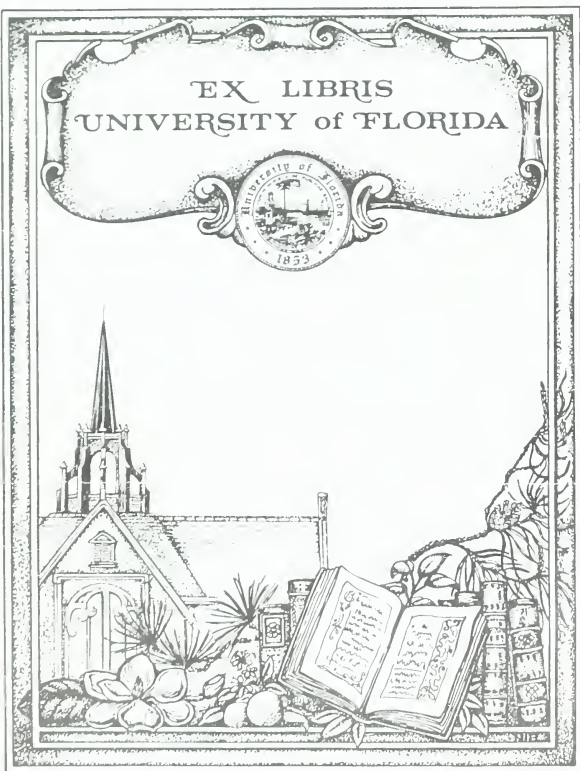





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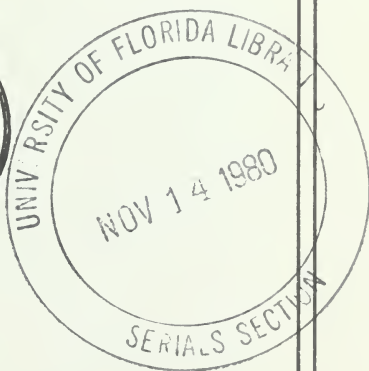




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# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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Vol. XLI

1979

Nos. 1, 2, 3, & 4

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*Published by the*  
  
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT  
  
OF  
  
ARCHIVES AND HISTORY





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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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An error was made in numbering Volume XXX with both parts No. 1 and No. 2 starting with page 1. To designate which part of the Volume has the notation the Volume is marked thusly, XXX<sup>1</sup> or XXX<sup>2</sup>.

A similar error in duplicate pagination appears in Volume XXVI. Please check pages 133-281 (Summer Issue #2, 1964) and pages 133-252 (Fall-Winter Issue #3-4, 1964) to verify the citations in the two issues.





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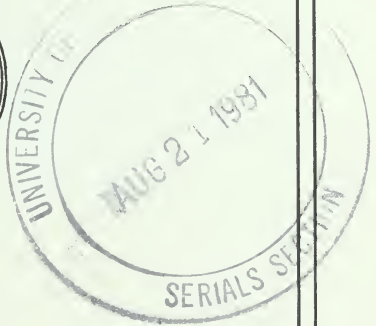
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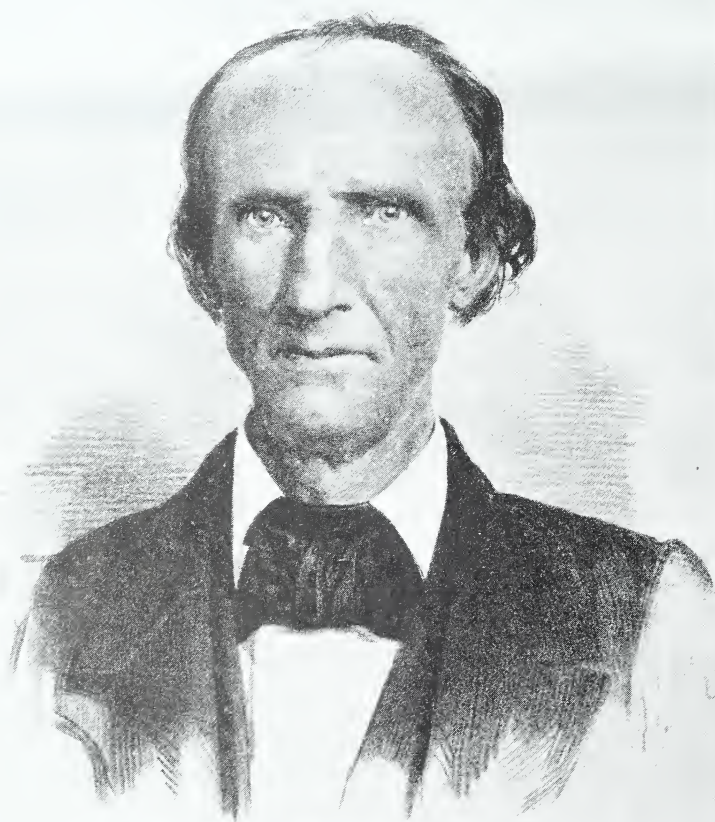
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*Henry Bryson*

Pastor of the Associate Presbyterian Church VINEY GROVE, TENN.  
Moderator of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, 1859.

*Published by Joseph M. Wilson No. 111 South 10<sup>th</sup> St. Phila.*

FRONTIER EVANGELIST  
THE JOURNAL OF HENRY BRYSON

edited by

John R. Williams

In his history of religion in the old southwest, Walter Brownlow Posey began his discussion of the trials of the traveling evangelists of the early nineteenth century by noting that, "The life of any preacher was hard. The ministry was no profession for a weakling, and preaching was no calling for one who loved his comforts." Posey's descriptions of "treacherous" roads and of "swollen streams" *sans* bridges<sup>1</sup> could well have been drawn from the journal a young evangelist named Henry Bryson kept while on a journey through Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida in 1826 and 1827. The uncertainty of life for one engaged in such an endeavor is illustrated by the fact that when Bryson finally returned to his home in South Carolina after an absence of many months in the wilds, he arrived in the best Tom Sawyer fashion to find his funeral in progress.

Henry Bryson was born February 20, 1799, to Scotch Irish parents in Laurens District, South Carolina. He studied at Union Academy in Abbeville District, and in 1823 he graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. He wanted to enter the ministry, but because his father had died and he was needed at home, he studied theology privately with John T. Pressly, the pastor of the local congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which his parents had joined while he was at Transylvania, rather than going to a seminary.<sup>2</sup>

Bryson was probably well trained, for this was not as informal an arrangement as it may seem. Pressley, who, incidentally, had some years previously journeyed to Tennessee on a mission much like the one his protégé' was to undertake,

<sup>1</sup>Walter Brownlow Posey, *Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861* (Lexington, 1966), 19.

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information about Bryson not drawn from the journal comes from *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Charleston, 1905), 81-83.

was a recognized theologian. He was the synod's "Professor of Divinity" from 1825 to 1831, apparently thus being authorized to teach privately. In 1831 Pressley became the only teacher at a seminary in Pittsburg. He later served as the moderator of the A.R.P. Synod and he was also elected president of Erskine College, although he declined the post.<sup>3</sup> The fact that he was Bryson's pastor was convenient, for the education-conscious Associate Reformed Presbyterians probably would not have allowed the young man to pursue his education in this manner under most ministers. Bryson completed his studies and was licensed to preach (not administer the sacraments; that required ordination) by the Second Presbytery of South Carolina on March 4, 1826. In December of that year, at the direction of his presbytery, he began the evangelistic tour described in his journal.

Despite the fascinating details Bryson recorded, it is not possible to trace his route precisely. He often mentioned only the surnames of the people he visited and did not tell where they lived. On several occasions he spent several days moving about in one general area. And, he was lost at least once. Generally, however, his path can be followed.

Leaving his native South Carolina, he crossed the Savannah River into Georgia and passed through Washington, Lexington, Athens, Winder and to Lawrenceville. He then went southeast as far as Covington, southwest to McDonough, and northwest to Decatur and to the Chattahoochee where he crossed into present-day Forsyth County. He completed the first Georgia leg of his journey by traveling northwest to Chattanooga.

In Tennessee the young preacher crossed the Tennessee River and went by way of Jasper and Winchester to Fayetteville in Lincoln County, where he would later be a pastor. He spent some time in this general area, including a side trip into Maury County (although Maury and Lincoln are not now contiguous, they once touched corner to corner), before turning south into Alabama.

Bryson traveled almost due south through Hazel Green,

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 304-305.



Huntsville, and again across the Tennessee River. He continued south to Blountsville and to Elyton in Jefferson County before turning back up Jones Valley and across to the Coosa Valley near New London. He then passed through Montevallo, Centreville, and down the Cahaba Valley to Selma. After some time in the Selma area, including a trip northwest to Perry County, Bryson crossed the Alabama River near Portland. He traveled through Wilcox County and probably a corner of Monroe on the way to Conecuh County. Here he again made side trips, including a retracing of his steps back to Portland, before setting out for Florida.

The evangelist's route then took him near present-day Andalusia, across the Pea River to near today's Daleville, across the Choctawhatchee, and over the Chattahoochee into southwest Georgia. He spent some time in the areas of Quincy and Tallahassee, Florida before following a similar path back to and through south Alabama. He visited Claiborne and then went north up the Alabama Valley, crossing the river at Portland again.

At this point the journal *per se* ends. What follows is a "Way Bill." In the journal Bryson kept a careful record of his expenses and of the distances he traveled, apparently in order to be able to present an accurate account to his presbytery. The way bill is this record without the interesting comments of the journal.

The way bill begins in Florida. It is possible that Bryson returned to that state after the last journal entry, and that there is a gap between the two accounts. This seems unlikely, however, considering the time the trip would have taken. It would have made it very difficult for him to have returned to South Carolina as soon as we know that he did. More likely, the way bill overlaps the last part of the journal. It begins, as we have noted, in Florida, and it gives Bryson's route north through Alabama and to the northwest corner of Tennessee.

It is not certain why Bryson discontinued the journal in favor of the way bill (if indeed he did; it may be that the last part of the former is simply lost), nor why even the way bill does not detail his journey all the way back to South Carolina.

It seems likely, however, that the ending of the journal, at least, coincided with an illness. According to *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, "During this journey he was stricken with fever in Florida. His life was despaired of when an old Scotch Highlander visited him and prayed earnestly for him in Gaelic. He began at once to improve and always felt that his recovery was in answer to that prayer."<sup>4</sup> The only serious illness in Florida mentioned in the journal, however, is that of Bryson's horse. It is probable that the evangelist became ill in Alabama, not Florida, probably at about the time the journal proper ends (June 13, 1827). It is also logical that after his recovery, being both weak and behind schedule, he traveled faster and did less evangelizing on the way home, thus having less about which to write and less time in which to do it.

Even the way bill, however, is incomplete. It shows that he traveled north to Greensboro, Tuscaloosa, and Russellville, and northeast to Athens and to Fayetteville, Tennessee. He then turned northwest to Maury County, Centerville, and Paris, and west to Dresden and into Obion, Tennessee's most northwestern county. At this point the record ends.

It is possible that the young preacher went through Kentucky on his way home, perhaps even stopping at his *alma mater* in Lexington. If this is the case, the fact that he turned in the opposite direction from South Carolina at Fayetteville was probably the result of the route planned by his presbytery. It is also possible, however, that in his weakened condition he was seeking a longer but easier way home. The roads he traveled during the way bill period were certainly better than those in northeast Alabama and north Georgia. He also avoided the sparsely settled Creek and Cherokee territories and the worst of the mountains. The fact that the way bill ends virtually on the banks of the Mississippi suggests that he may have gone by boat up that river and the Ohio to some point where easy land transportation would have been available—perhaps a stage from Louisville to Lexington and across the mountains.

Whatever his route and why he took it, he must have traveled fairly swiftly from Obion. The journal ends in mid-

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

June, and, as we have seen, it is likely that he was delayed for some time by an illness before continuing north. According to the *Centennial History* the trip lasted a year, but it also records that "On the 3rd day of November, 1827, he was ordained to the full work of the ministry."<sup>5</sup> Since this ordination probably did not take place immediately upon his return, it seems likely that he was in South Carolina at least by early October.

For much of his life Bryson was an influential figure in his denomination, but not as a traveling evangelist. He married Hannah McMullen and they moved to Lincoln County, Tennessee. There, in addition to preaching, he conducted a "classical academy" at his home.<sup>6</sup> According to one writer, Viney Grove Academy "once ranked with the standard educational institutions of the South."<sup>7</sup>

In 1827 or 1828 Bryson and another minister, John Renwick, organized Prosperity Church near Fayetteville. Bryson was its minister until 1847 when he resigned because of poor health. The first building was a log house with a dirt floor, but in 1841 and 1842 a new building was constructed. It was destroyed by an arsonist, however, and a third building was erected in 1881 and 1882, a few years after Bryson's death.<sup>8</sup> Bryson is also said to have organized Bethel Church in Lincoln County in 1830, and to have been its first pastor.<sup>9</sup> In his journal (entry for January 14, 1827), however, he mentioned worshiping in a church by that name in that same region which was obviously already in operation when he arrived. In 1859 he was elected moderator of his denomination's Synod.<sup>10</sup> Although he was in poor health for much of his life, he lived until 1874.

In 1919 the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 82-83.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>7</sup>*The Goodspeed Histories of Maury, Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, Bedford & Marshall Counties of Tennessee*, reprinted from *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee* (1866) (Columbia, Tenn., 1971), 783.

<sup>8</sup>*Centennial History*, 552-553.

<sup>9</sup>*Goodspeed Histories*, 784.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph M. Wilson, *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac and Annual Remembrances of the Church for 1860* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1860), II, plate facing 184.

established a college at Fayetteville, Tennessee and named it in Bryson's honor. It was closed in 1929 because the church could not afford to support two colleges (the other was Erskine) during the depression. However, "A large group of Bryson alumni and friends come to the Fayetteville A.R. Presbyterian Church each June for a reunion — no school left — but they have each other and what a marvelous spirit they have," according to a participant.<sup>11</sup>

Henry Bryson probably prepared a clean copy of his journal to present to his presbytery, but neither his original notes nor such a copy can be found. The present text is that of a copy made some years ago by Mrs. Pressley Fife of Fayetteville, Tennessee. She worked from what she described as a "very bad copy on onion skin."<sup>12</sup> There are many obvious errors in this version. Some, like "Laurensville" for Lawrenceville, Georgia are made consistently and were probably mistakes by the author. Others may have been the work of copyists somewhere along the line. For example, the "Judge Morton" and the "Martin" of December 18 and 19 are obviously the same person. At some points, however, it is not clear whether the text is correct or not. The "Mr. George McGill" of December 10 may or may not be the same person as the "Mr. George McDill" of three days later. To avoid making further errors in the name of correction, the spelling of Mrs. Fife's copy has been retained here. Definite and probable corrections appear in the text in brackets the first time an error appears, and in the footnotes.

### TRAVELS OF HENRY BRYSON

*Decb. 1826*

Monday morning Dec. [4] 1826

On this morning about half past eight o'clock, I left Mother's in company with brother Wm. We traveled on to Pucket's Ferry on the Saluda River, 8 miles, and there we met with our brother in law, George Nickels. We three went

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Mrs. Pressley Fife of Fayetteville, Tenn., Jan. 30, 1979. I am indebted to Mrs. Fife for the use of her text of Bryson's journal as well as for other information.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*



on together to the Rev. John T. Pressly's [Bryson's theological tutor] that night and stayed with him. The day was somewhat disagreeable. It rained on us from near Ligon store to the river, then some little afterwards. The weather was cold and the wind blew piercing. I rode in the gig most of the day. Expenses were nothing.

Tuesday morning. 9 o'clock. After breckfast [*sic*], here brother leaves us. He takes the road . . . on our journey for Georgia. From the Rev. J.T. Pressly's we went on to the ferry on little river, I crossed free. From there to Barksdale's ferry on Savannah River,<sup>13</sup> crossed there also free. We rode from there to Washington, Wilks [Wilkes] County, Georgia that night, we arrived there about 7 o'clock at night. Put up at Alexander's tavern, after supper, George and myself went up street to the Presbyterian Meeting-house, where we heard the Rev. Mr. [Alexander H.] Webster<sup>14</sup> preach. After service we returned to the tavern, and shortly afterwards, some person having let Mr. Webster know that there was a preacher of the presbyterian order here, he immediately called at the tavern to see me, and invited me home with him all night. Treated here very . . . ndly, early the next morning I arose and went up to the tavern and eat breckfast and started. The day was clear and pleasant. I was charged \$1.50 Nickels, \$1.75 cents. There was a revival of religion commencing here.

3. Wednesday morning we left this in company with a Mr. Smith from E. Tennessee, a Merchant, who had been at Augusta to purchase goods for to supply his store. We went through Lexinging [Lexington], a handsome little town, and proceeded on that day to a Mr. John Mayne's, four miles from Athens. Here we were very hospitably received. Had a considerably long conversation on religion. The people was of the Methodist persuasion. I was not charged anything for my night's lodging. This day was dark, foggy, cold and somewhat missty [*sic*] all

<sup>13</sup>"Barksdale's Fer." shows on a period map, near Goshen, Ga. The road Bryson probably followed ran from the ferry to Goshen and on to Washington. H. S. Tanner, "Georgia and Alabama" from *American Atlas* (Philadelphia, 1823; reprint ed., Atlanta, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup>Webster (d. 1827), formerly "a tutor in the college at Athens," came to Washington in 1823 and was also "Rector of the Academy" there. The church building was apparently completed in 1826. Eliza A. Bowen, *The Story of Wilkes County Georgia*, ed. Louise Frederick Hays (Marietta, Ga., 1950), 159-162.

day we never saw the sun during the day. We rode about 40 miles.

4. Thursday morning we went through Athens, a town of considerable size, situated on the [North Fork of the Oconee] River. Two miles beyond this we separated with Mr. Smith of Tennessee. He took the right and we the left hand towards Laurensville [Lawrenceville] in Guinette [Gwinnett] county. Passed by Pentecosts, jugtavern [now Winder], into the hog mountain road<sup>15</sup> and a way into Alen Coleman's 1½ miles below B's Mill on the Alcovy River. Stayed allnight here for nothing. This was another very dark missty and cloudy day, we never saw the sun until near night. We traveled near 57 miles. The land nothing but poor hills and nobs, desolate looking places.

5. Friday morning. left C's at sunrise, went in by Elijah Foster's, we spoke and then went on to Mr. Morrow's on Yellow River, took breckfast and had our horses fed, charge nothing. 4 miles from here to Laurensville. We went on to Laurensville, a very flourishing little Town, here enquired for John Mills, the Blacksmyth, found him, and after a short conversation, George Nickels and I parted. We went on to find Andrew Hunter in the lower edge of Guinette, and I stopped and took dinner at the Tavern with J. Mills. After dinner, he rode out with me to Stewarts, the Silver Smiths 2 miles from town. Stopped here a short time. Then went on to Mr. Joseph Coney's 4 miles farther on Yellow Riber [sic]. The place where I was sent by order of presbytery. Here stayed all night. The day was clear and pleasant.

6th. Saturday morning. Stayed at Mr. Coney's until evening, and then went to his Son's, J.C.'s and preached that night. And notwithstanding the night was cold and the warning short, there was a considerable number assembled. I stayed at young Jos. Coney's.

7. Sabbath. This day preached to a large and respectable assemblage. The people appeared to pay good attention to sermon.

<sup>15</sup>The Hog Mountain Road "is coincident with present Georgia Highway 53, running from Winder to Watkinsville." It apparently extended to Hog Mountain near Buford in Gwinnett County. Kenneth K. Krakow, *Georgia Place-Names* (Macon, Ga., 1975), 110.

I went this night to Mr. John Weed's, about one mile from Mr. C's.

8. Monday. This morning I took my leave of these people and went on to Mr. Stewart's, the silver smith's, and took dinner and had my horse fed. I then went on to Laurensville and preached by candle light in the academy, the house was crowded with hearers and we had good order. In the village there are a male and female teacher, a Mr. [John S.] Wilson,<sup>16</sup> a presbyterian clergiman [*sic*], and a Miss Farrow are the proprietors.

Presbyterianism flourishes considerably here. The greatest number, and also the most intelligent and respectable citizens are professors of one church or other. There are also a great number of Methodists and some Baptists.

9. Tuesday. After breckfast, expenses nothing, I went down to Covington county seat in Newton. Put up with a Baptist clergyman, Mr. Hand, Thomas J. Hand. Preached in the courthouse, there was not a very great collection. There is an academy here taught by the Rev. Mr. Hand. There are a great number of professors but mostly of the Methodist order. My expenses were nothing here. Mrs. Hand's maiden name was Arrington, formerly an attendant on Mr. Loury's ministry near Louisville.

10th. Wednesday. I left Covington going a west direction, crossed Yellow River at Briant's bridge 3 miles from C. and there to the snapping sholes on South River [Snapping Shoals, east of McDonough] 7 miles to Mr. George McGill's. These sholes is the end of navigation. I stayed at Mr. McGill's this night and next day till 3 o'clock. The people here are indeed a very kind people.

The land here is tollerable good, and is selling from two to 5 dollars an acre. On this river at these sholes there is a

<sup>16</sup>"The Reverend Dr. John S. Wilson" came to Lawrenceville in 1824 and "took charge of the Lawrenceville Academy in 1826 and was its rector or superintendent for twelve years." He was pastor of Fairview Presbyterian Church and later of Goshen Church. James C. Flanigan, *History of Gwinnett County Georgia*, (2 vols. Hapeville, Ga., 1943 and 1956), I, 69.

great trap fishery for catching shad.

11. Thursday. I came up this evening to Mr. Russel's Tavern in McDonough County seat of Henry, enquired for Doctor Stokes, but he had gone out of town and was not to be in until the next day. The people of the tavern were generally peaceable, but great politicians [*sic*], and argued to late at night on the sublect [*sic*]. The land up from the snapping sholes to McDonough is indeed but poor. This town is flourishing fast, a splendid court house is near about finished.

12. Friday. I stayed at the tavern until after breakfast, then was conducted by Mr. Russel over to Stokes's boarding house but he was not at home, and I stayed there until about 12 o'clock at which time he came home. I took dinner and supper here with Stokes' and after night preached to a very small number of people. I stayed all night with Dr. Stokes. Paid nothing for my dinner and supper at Stokes' boarding house, not at the Russel's tavern.

13. Saturday. This morning I saw Mercer Babb. I started before breckfast and came down to Mr. George McDill's, preached to but a small collection of people. The place of preaching was a small distance from McDill's gate at a stand.

14. Sabbath. This day was clear and nice. A vas [*sic*] con-course of people assembled. I preached two sermons to them, the [*sic*] behaved really well, went after dinner to James Gastons one mile off.

15. Monday. It rained near all night, and after breckfast this morning, then broke off. The good people gave me nine dollars and a quarter for my labours among them. Thomas McDill, and James Gaston came with me about 15 miles. Came through a very poor part of the country part of the way, a very rich one the other. Came on by where Wm. Rodgers lives, and the Hollingsworths. The country about them is very hilly not so very rich, but from them up to near Decator [*sic*], is really good. I came on to Decator the distance of about 42 miles. There found Doc. Calhoun the first man. Put up at William's tavern, eat supper, and C. and myself went up to Mr. Lemmon's,



a member of Mr. [A.] Kirkpatrick's<sup>17</sup> church. I preached to a house crowded full and the doors also full. The people behaved well. After sermon I returned to Mr. Lemmon's, stayed all night. Saw James Stokes. Charged nothing for either my horse or self.

16. Tuesday. I left Decator in company with a young man, a mechanic, formerly from Virginia, he came with me 10 miles. I this day came through a vast tract of good country on to the Chattahoochee. Traveled a north and northeast direction all day. Crossed the Chattahoochy [*sic*] into the Cherokee Nation at Rodger's ferry and stayed with him all night. He was a good old Methodist and charged me nothing for a nights lodging and breckfast next morning. This, his ferry and dwelling, are about 13 miles from Laurensville, Guinette County.<sup>18</sup>

17. Wednesday. This is a fair and clear day. I took a new blazed way from this into the Alabama road one mile and a half of Blackburns on the old federal road, and after going along the Alabama road 1½ mile, took a little road and crossed the Hightower River and went in the Tennessee road,<sup>19</sup> about

<sup>17</sup>"A Kirkpatrick" was received in Hopewell Presbytery (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) in Georgia from South Carolina Presbytery in 1826, and dismissed to South Carolina in 1829. James Stacy, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Georgia* (Elberton, Ga., n.d.), 332.

<sup>18</sup>A Cherokee (or, more likely, part Cherokee) family named Rogers, kinsmen of the humorist Will Rogers, lived and operated a ferry on the Chattahoochee where Rogers' Bridge is now. According to Goff, the home and ferry were in Forsyth County, but a U.S. Geological Survey map (Duluth Quadrangle) shows the bridge south of the Forsyth line, crossing the river between Gwinnett and Fulton Counties just north of Duluth. John H. Goff, *Placenames of Georgia*, ed. Francis Lee Utley and Marion R. Hemperley (Athens, Ga., 1975), 458.

<sup>19</sup>A number of routes were called "the Alabama Road." Two "Federal Roads" ran to the west. This must have been the one which ran from "the present Hall-Jackson County line northwestward across the Cherokee country toward Knoxville and Nashville." *Ibid.*, 393. There is a Hightower Creek in Forsyth County, but the name is a corruption of Etowah, so this could have been the river of that name of which Hightower Creek is a tributary. Krakow, *Georgia Place-Name*, 108. An "important Cherokee route known as the Tennessee Road or Sally Hughes Trail," the latter name derived from that of "a ferry on the Etowah which was maintained by a Cherokee woman named Sally Hughes," could have taken Bryson to Tennessee. More likely, however, he followed the "Old Federal Road" (a name common to a number of roads; this one was also called the "Cherokee Federal Road of 1805") which ran from Flowery Branch, Ga. across the Cherokee lands to Tennessee. One branch led past Vann's home and Taylors, a stage stop, both of which Bryson mentioned, to Missionary Ridge and beyond. Both roads are discussed and the latter is mapped in Goff, *Placenames*. 251-252, 254n., 349-360.

27 miles from Rodger's. In this part of the road there is some of the very best of land. I saw no house but one from the time I left Rodger's till I came on the Alabama road. I went to judge Daniel's<sup>20</sup> this night. The whole distance 42 miles.

18th. Thursday. Paid 75 cents for my night's lodging. This morning my horse is foundered, and has been very sick the over night, and has beat himself very much. Traveled alone this day to judge Morton's, a large white house, the entertainment good. Paid 87½ for lodging and turnpikeage. This was a very wet day until after 12 o'clock. It then cleared off cold. 30 miles traveled. This is mountainous country.

19. Friday. I left Martin's [sic] with a sorrowful heart. My horse was so bad floundered that he could scarcely walk. I came on to Van's 15 miles, took breckfast, and had my horse fed, and paid 37½ cents. This is a splendid brick building and well finished off, outside and inside.<sup>21</sup> Came on this night to the widow Wolf's, a half breed, was well used. Whole distance traveled this day 28 miles.

20. Saturday. I paid this morning 75 cents for my supper and horse the over night. Then came on to Mr. Taylor's<sup>22</sup> 12 miles, took breckfast and had my horse fed, paid 37½ cents. In comeing [sic] here I turned off the main road about a half a mile back. These people are half breeds, or rather more so. They are remarkably friendly and sociable, much more so than I have yet seen. This river I cross here so many times is called the Sickamoga [Chickamauga]. The country is hilly and poor except on the watercourse. Here it is rich. Paid here 37½ cents for my horse fee and breckfast. Then I came on to Coody's 7 miles, stopped and stayed all night. These appear to

<sup>20</sup>Possibly R. F. ("Uncle Frank" Daniel, an early settler of Cherokee County. The surname could not have been too common in a time of such sparse white settlement. Lloyd G. Marlin, *History of Cherokee County* (Atlanta, 1932), 36, 38-39.

<sup>21</sup>Joseph Vann's fine home still stands about two miles from Chatsworth, Ga. "Rich Joe" was the wealthiest member of probably the wealthiest Cherokee family. Henry Thompson Malone, *The Cherokees of the Old South* (Athens, Ga., 1956), 1, 125, 150, 204n. Also see Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *The Chattanooga Country, 1540-1976* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1977), 68.

<sup>22</sup>A "noted public stop" near Ringgold Gap in Catoosa County. Goff, *Placenames*, 358. In 1826, however, there was probably no stage service in the area, and Taylors was probably not yet so well-known.

be very clever decent people. I truly am this night tired and nearly worn out. I feel considerably depressed in spirits. O the fortitude, perseverance, and resignation that a missionary of the cross of Christ needs. Had not God given them many great and exceeding precious promises for to rely on they would certainly shrink back from the undertaking. O the difficulties and hardships, to which they are exposed. My heart truly feels sorrowful and greatly discouraged, but O that the Lord may strengthen me, and incourage [sic] me in his work. Paid for the night 75 cents.

21. This morning paid 75 cents, my horse is very lame, can scarcely walk. I came on two and one half miles to Brainard [Brainerd], the missionary station, and put up here for the Sabbath. Found here the Rev. Mr. [Samuel A.] Worcester<sup>23</sup> and his wife, he however was not at home and Mr. Ellsworth and his lady, he is the principle [sic] teacher of the boys and his lady is chief cook. Miss Sawyer is the principle among the girls. Mr. Veil and his lady attend to domestic affairs. Mr. Funnel a blacksmith. Mr. Blunt and his cooks. I stayed and preached once on the Sabbath.

22. Monday. My horse is very little better. This day I visited all the different rooms and classes, heard them recite, and lectured a short time to them, and sang and prayed with them and then left them. This night it snowed and your other missionary came in and they would have me to preach again to their other students. I conformed to their request.

23. Tuesday. I stayed this day until one o'clock, and then left this and went to one Mr. [Daniel] Ross's,<sup>24</sup> a white man, living

<sup>23</sup>Brainerd Mission, a mission to the Cherokees, was founded by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in 1817 and is the origin of the name Missionary Ridge. President Monroe visited there in 1819. Samuel Austin Worcester later became famous as the plaintiff in the celebrated battle-winning but war-losing Supreme Court case, *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), an attempt to stop Georgia from stealing lands over which the Cherokees held sovereignty. The court found for Worcester (i.e. the Cherokees), but as Andrew Jackson had prophesied, John Marshall was not able to enforce the decision. Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, *Tennessee: A Short History* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1969), 152-153; and Govan and Livingood, *Chattanooga Country*, 61-64, 68.

<sup>24</sup>Daniel Ross (b. 1760 in Scotland), a trader, operated a "store on Chattanooga Creek near the foot of Lookout Mountain and operated there until about 1816." His wife was the mixed-blood daughter of another Scottish trader, John McDonald. Their son, John Ross, operated Ross's Landing, the seed of the future city of

at the lookout mountain. This day was cold and disagreeable. Ross lives 7 miles from the Missionary station. One of his black family having died, he requested of me the favour of delaying on the next day and speaking a word for them. I believing that the rest would be for my horses [*sic*] good, consented to do so. I paid for my boarding and care of my horse 2 dollars during Sabbath and Monday and part of Tuesday.

25. Wednesday. This morning is one of the coldest I have as yet experienced. As soon as breckfast was over and the coffin was finished I commenced preaching. I gave a short discourse from these words, Job. 14 Ch. 1st V. "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."

There were several full blooded Indians, some half breeds and a number of blacks, they conducted just tollerably well. The old man Ross very ardently insisted that I should stay with him that day and night, as it was so extremely cold. I could not however, but started on my way a little after twelve o'clock. I was charged nothing for myself and horse. This was one of the coldest days I ever felt. I really thought my fortune hard, but when thinking of my dear Redeemer's difficulties, and his aples. [*sic*] and followers [*sic*] troubles to preach the gosple [*sic*] I then was perfectly easy and satisfied. Paid five cents tole gait [*sic*]. This night I traveled late after the big star was down, and never was so cold before. I came on to the Tennessee River and there stayed. Here there was a company of wicked hog-drovers. This is Vann's establishment.<sup>25</sup>

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Chattanooga, beginning in about 1815. John Ross was from 1828 until his death in 1866 the principal chief of the Cherokees. It was he who in 1820 led them to adopt a republican form of government, and later he was the leader in the struggle against removal. Gertrude McDavis Ruskin, *John Ross: Chief of an Eagle Race* (n.p., 1963), 15, 20; William T. Alderson and Robert M. McBride, eds., *Tennessee Historical Markers* (n.p., 1962), 102; Donald Davidson, *The Tennessee*, 2 vols. Vol. I: *The Old River* (New York, 1946), 148, 214, 261, 267, 272, 275; and Robert Sparks Walker, *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain* Kingsport, Tenn., 1941), 176-177, 227-229.

<sup>25</sup>It seems likely that this commercial establishment belonged to the same Joseph Vann at whose home Bryson had had breakfast a few days earlier. Vann owned a hotel and ferry on the Chattahoochee just north of Roger's ferry, and he probably owned this one on the Tennessee, as well. It is certain that when the Cherokees lost their lands in Georgia, he moved to Hamilton County, Tennessee and lived there until 1838 when they were expelled from that state. Goff, *Placenames*, 217, 351-352, and Alderson, *et. al.*, *Historical Markers*, 94

26. Thursday. I paid one dollar for my night's lodging and passage over the Tennessee River. I then came on to Jasper C.H. 5 miles and took breckfast at Russel's tavern, paid 50 cents, and then came on to the top of Cumberland Mnt. and stayed at one Gibson's, an indifferent house of entertainment. This day I never saw the like of pigeons. At the foot of Cumb. Mt. there is a tole gait [*sic*] at which I paid seven pence.

27. Friday. I paid 62½ cents my mornings [*sic*] bill for supper, bed and horse feed. Then came on through Winchester one mile and put up at one, Mr. Benj. Dechard's,<sup>26</sup> one of the Cumberland Presbyterians, and he is a very kind man indeed. I went with him to society this night in town and there found a very pious and feeling and aparently living set of Christians. I spoke to them a short time and prayed with them. We had an interesting meeting, then came home. And Mr. Deckard [*sic*], knowing that I did wish to hire a horse, offered me his large mule to ride down to the people of Lincoln [Lincoln] County. I thanked him and gladly accepted his offer. I paid nothing for the night etc.

28. Saturday. After breckfast I left here humbly riding upon a mule, yet joyful that I was so highly favored, I came on down to Fayetteville, there came in with Hugh Parkinson, an elder of Elk River congregation and he conducted me to old Mr. Taylor's an elder of the same, where we stayed all night. Here is the place assigned by Presbytery to me to visit. From about 11 miles above Fayetteville the good land commences, and continues along down here. This resembles old Kentucky.

29. Sabbath. This is a very cold windy and snowy day. I went to the meeting house preached to a considerable congregation, never scarcely suffered so much with cold in my life, after sermon, came home to Mr. Taylor's.

Monday. This is certainly the most bitter cold weather that ever I felt in all my travels. I stayed all day here, had several visitors and spent the night.

30. Tuesday. The weather this day moderates a little. I had the good fortune to get young Mr. Hamilton to undertake to

<sup>26</sup>A leading merchant in Winchester. *Goodspeed Histories*, 797.



go with the mule back and to bring down my horse. Stayed all day here again.

31. Wednesday. This is fast day. We attended church and after sermon I went home with Mr. Johnathan Anderson and stayed with him this night.

32. Thursday. This day Mr. Kidd came over for me and I went and spent this day and night with him.

33. Friday. I went home with Mr. Eli Tailor and spent this day and night.

34. Saturday. 6th Jan. 1827. I went over Elk River to Mr. Brown Parkinson's.

7th. Sabbath. This day I spoke to a respectable little society. I stayed all night here again and had the tooth ache badly. I got little or no sleep this night with it.

8. Mon. Mr. Park. and I went and got my tooth drawn out. And this day went over to his brother in law's Mr. Bingham's and stayed all night.

9. Jan. Tues. We went home to his house and then down to his brother's, Hugh, Pr. and stayed there that night.

10. Jan. Wednesday. I stayed and studied here.

11. Jan. Thurs. Mr. P. and I went down to old Mr. Leghorn's and over some land close by in that settlement. I came back home to his house that night.

12. Jan. Fri. This day studied until evenight and then went over to Stewart's and Cochern's and stayed there all night.

13. Jan. Sat. Several of us went over the river. I stayed at old Mr. Taylor's.

14. Jan. Sab. We attended sermon, at Bethel, and I returned after sermon by old Mr. Tailor's, eat dinner, and went over to Anderson's and stayed all night.

15. Jan. Mon. This morning Mr. Kidd and myself went up to the people of Head Spring and stayed all night at McAdam's.

16. Jan. Tues. We had sermon here at this place today, and then on to Mr. Carpenter's and tarried all night there. O but it is cold weather.

17. Jan. Wed. This day we start for Maury county [sic]. And landed at old Mr. Scott's.<sup>27</sup> We tarried all night with him.

18. Jan. Thurs. We went on to Mr. William Galloway's and not finding the Preacher<sup>28</sup> there we went on the tailors [sic], where I got my coat mended and paid 37½, and then came back to Wm. Galloway's, found the preacher, and tarried all night here.

19. Jan. Frid. We stayed with Mr. Galloway until after dinner, and then we went over to Mr. Matthew's esq. stayed there this night.

20. Jan. Sat. We went in company with Mr. Harris about 6. Then went on by ourselves down about 6 or 7 miles farther to old Mr. Heart's a member of Union congregation<sup>29</sup> in Maury County, we stayed all night with him.

<sup>27</sup>Probably Samuel Scott, an early (1810) settler of the area, originally from North Carolina (probably Mecklenburg County). He was one of the original ruling elders in Hopewell A.R.P. Church, not far from Bigbyville, which was founded in 1820 by the Rev. Isaac Greer. The first permanent pastor there was Robert Galloway (see below), and Bryson's son, John H. Bryson, was the pastor from 1854 to 1865 or 1866. *Centennial History*, 125-126, 493; [William Stuart Fleming], *A Historical Sketch of Maury County* (Columbia, Tenn., 1876; reprint ed., 1967), 21; and William Bruce Turner, *History of Maury County, Tennessee* (Nashville, 1955), 102, 165-166.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Millen Galloway, born in York County, S.C. on December 25, 1796. An 1820 graduate of the University of North Carolina, he was licensed that year and immediately went to Maury County where he was pastor of both Hopewell and Union Churches. Bryson later conducted his wedding (to Eliza Ann Leetch). William Galloway must have been a relative. *Centennial History*, 125-126.

<sup>29</sup>Union was in the western part of the county near Cathey's Creek on a farm owned by a Mr. Kinzer. The building was destroyed March 21, 1835 by a tornado. Turner (*Maury County*, 165) says it was never rebuilt, but according to the *Centennial History* (601) a new building was erected the following year and the organization was dissolved at some later date.

21. Jan. Sab. We attended sermon at Union. There was but a small collection of people out on this occasion. We went this evening to Mr. Faries'.

22. Mon. We came up to old Mr. Scott's and had sermon at his house. There I found my cousin James Bryson and I went with him this evening.

23. Tuesday. Mr. Kidd and Wm. Hamilton and I came on this day up to Mr. Carpenter's on the Ridge between Elk and Duck Rivers, there we met with the Rev. Mr. Galloway and J. Anderson.

24. Wednesday. We went to Head Spring and G. and myself spoke to the people. I stayed at Mr. McClain's. Rec'd  $3\frac{1}{4}$  Dollars.

25. Thurs. This day we came on down to Mr. Anderson's, and took a small rout [*sic*] over some land. Here we saw some of as good land as I would wish to see.

26. Friday. Anderson and Myself went to visit old Mr. Hughs, who was supposed to be lying on his death bed. He is a man well acquainted with the scriptures, and apparently a very pious man. I spent truly an agreeable day with him. This evening I went to old Mr. Taylor's.

27. Jan. Sat. After dinner Henry Taylor and myself went over Elk river [*sic*] to Mr. Cockern's. I stayed with him this night.

28. Sab. We attended preaching at Mr. Brown Parkinson's. There was a very large and respectful assembly here this day. I tarried here all night.

29. Mond. Several of the congregation assembled in to see me start on my mission. I left Mr. B. Parkinson's about 9 o'clock. Parkinson went with me to the Alabama line joined with the Tennessee. This day I went through a tract of rich rich country. Passed through Hazelgreen and Huntsville, nice little towns and came on to one Mr. Turner where I paid him  $87\frac{1}{2}$  cents for my nights [*sic*] lodging.<sup>30</sup> 33 miles.

<sup>30</sup>Bryson was on the "Meridian Road," so named because it followed a surveyor's meridian for part of its length. He would also have passed through Meridianville. Peter A. Brannon, *By-paths in Alabama* (Montgomery, 1929), 37.

30. Tues. This morning I rode on to Ditto's landing<sup>31</sup> on Tennessee River. There put up at Dr. Wily's and at 12 o'clock preached to almost the empty walls. There are a great number of people here in this little town but they are a most desperately wicked, disapated people. I had a thought of spending the day with the people of that place, but when I found that even when there was sermon at their doors they would not come to it, stood without talking and swearing, I thought it was high time for me to be traveling, therefore I put off as soon as sermon was over and I got my dinner. Dr. Wily paid my ferriage over the river. O the wickedness of man. I went this evening to a Mr. Cay's on Cumberland Mt. 8 miles from the river. 3 miles to Dr. Wily's, 8 to Cay's — 11.

31. Wed. I traveled part of this day in the edge of the Cherokee Nation. I took breckfast and had my horse fed at one Mr. Henderson's, and paid him 50 cts, and came on this night to Blountsville, preached there to a small society of well behaved people. Paid nothing for my night's lodging. 40 miles.<sup>32</sup>

1. Feb. Thurs. I left this village and crossed Big and Little Black Warrior Rivers and took breckfast at the widow Hamby's [Mrs. Gabriel Hanby] and paid her 50 cts. and came on in to Ione's [Jone's] Valley to one Mr. George Nash's,<sup>33</sup> 38 miles.

<sup>31</sup>"Old Man" John Ditto, a Pennsylvanian, was perhaps the first white resident of Madison County. He lived among the Iidians, working as a trader, at Ditto's Landing (or Cherokee-Old-Fields) near present-day Whitesburg. Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama* (n.p., 1909; rev. ed., Montgomery, 1916), 6; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (4 vols., Chicago, 1921), II, 923.

<sup>32</sup>Bryson was probably on the "Bear Meat Cabin Road" which ran south from Ditto's Landing to Blountsville (formerly called Bear Meat Cabin) and which included a fifteen mile stretch through Cherokee territory. At Blountsville it turned south and southwest to Tuscaloosa. Blount County Historical Society, *The Heritage of Blount County* (n.p., 1972; reprint ed., 1977), 18. This road and others are shown on a map, "Historic Roads and Trails," published by the Alabama Highway Department (1975).

<sup>33</sup>Col. or Gen. Gabriel Hanby of Henry County, Va. and his wife Nancy, the daughter of a Col. Nicholas of North Carolina and later of the Knoxville area, moved to Alabama in 1817 and settled "on a tract near the Polly Martin Ford on the Warrior River, just below the junction of the Little Warrior and the Blackburn Fork of the Warrior River" near today's Locust Fork. They built and operated a three-story log inn. Hanby was the Blount County representative in the constitutional convention, and he later served in the legislature. The county court met for the first

2. Feb. Paid 75. This morning, having heard of John Crawford who was living about one mile off the road, I concluded that I must go and see him. I went to his father in laws old Mr. Irwin's, and took breckfast, and then went down to Crawford's. After this I came on to Mr. Alexander English's son's house about 14 miles from where I stayed all night. He is a Ceceder [Associate Reformed Presbyterian].

3. Sat. I came home with the old man English and stayed until Sab. morning. 3 miles.

4. Sab. His family and I went to sermon at Elyton. There was a large assembly, and conducted well. I went home with Joseph Hodges. I received nothing for my services. 12 miles.

5. Mon. I stayed this day with Mr. Hodges.

6. Tues. I left T. [*sic*] Hodges to go to Coosy [Coosa] Valley. But Cahaba River being between me and it, and the River being raised by rain so as I could not ford it, I concluded that I would head it, and did so. I traveled this day up Ione's Valley up to near the head, to one McAdams. I stayed at a place called the Big Spring. It rained on me all day. This night I stripped off and dried my clothes and things in my saddle bags.

7. Paid 62½ This was a rainy dark morning. I hated much to start out in the rain, but had to do so. I found by enquiury that there was a creek which would swim a horse a short distance from this place, and therefore my passage the roadway into the Cahaba Valley was not passable. I enquired if there was no way of wading the creek. The reply was, that there was none without going part of the way through the woods. I was afraid to try it my lone and endeavored to hire the old man to go with me but as it was raining so hard he would not. I then resolved to try it my lone. There was a little path way for about 4 miles, then for 5 or 6 miles there was none. I concluded that I could steer the course right, but got lost and wandered about up and down through the mountains for the greater part of the day. In the evening, however, I got out into

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time in 1820 at the Hanby's inn, with George Nash as Chief Justice. Hanby died in 1824 or 1826. *Heritage of Blount County*, 24-26, 71, 266; and Owen, *History*, III, 739-40.



the Cahaba Valley to one Watson's, and there stayed all night. I was wet through all my clothing, cloke, coat, jacket and shirt. A wonderful day's rain indeed.

This day I saw a great many deer skipping about over the hills.

8th. Th. This morning is fair. I stayed until after breakfast, and was charged nothing. The man was so kind as to take his horse and put me into the trail which crossed over the mountains into the Coosa Valley. The distance was only about 12 or 15 miles. I got along tollerably well this day. I landed at tailor Lockridge's this night in Coosy V.

9th. F. After breckfast I started down the valley to Wm. Flemming's and when attempting to swim my horse across Kelley's creek I had like to have gotten my horse drowned. However we were both preserved. I came on to Wm. Flemming's this night.

10th. Sat. I stayed here all day and this night.

11th. Sab. This day we had sermon at Wm. F's. There was a considerable collection of people for such a thinly settled place. The people conducted with becoming respect. This night I stayed also here.

12th. Mon. After dinner I went over to Hugh Wiseman's and stayed there this night. H.W. lives about a quarter of a mile off Wm. F's.

13th. Tues. I left here and came down the V. to John N's. and stayed with him this night.

14th. W. This morning I left John N's, and went up to Robert N's, stayed a short time, and then went on by John Strain's and from that down to John W.'s. I tarried here this night.

15th. Th. I stayed here from this till Monday morning all except one night I went over to stay with Mr. Elliott, Wiseman's son-in-law.

19th. M. This day I came on down to John Seely's and here spent the night 5 miles below Willson Hill.<sup>34</sup>

20th. Tu. This day I turned into the Cahaba river and went into the falls of it at a little town called Centerville [Centreville], and went on 5 miles below this on the river and stayed at cousin Johnathan Potts.

21. W. This day I rested and preached here at night.

22. Th. I came on down the river to old Town,<sup>35</sup> and then took the ridge road to Sellma [Selma], and stayed this night [at] a baptist friend's house, 8 miles from Selma.

23. Fri. Having made some enquiry for the peoples name that I was sent to, came on to one of them by the name of Craig, esq. Here I stayed this day out and Saturday [sic].

24th. Sat. During this day I stayed at esq. James Craig's<sup>36</sup> and studied over some things for sabbath.

25th. Sab. We attended church and there were but few considering the day and the thickness of the settlement of the country. One woman fainted during the second prayer. The Rev. Alexander came this afternoon to attend a bible class at this place. He then appointed sermon at Craig's after night. There were a considerable number attended this evening. I, in the first place gave them a short sermon, and then A. gave

<sup>34</sup>An early name for Montevallo, probably then still in use although an 1823 map gives the present name. The city was named for the first resident, Jesse Wilson, one of Jackson's soldiers. *Ibid.*, II, 1036; Peter A. Brannon, *Adventures on the Highbroad* (Montgomery, 1930), 29; and Tanner, "Georgia and Alabama." There is, however, a Wilsonville near the Coosa.

<sup>35</sup>Old Town or Cahaba Old Town, now perpetuated on the map only by the name Old Town Creek, was about seven miles north northeast of Marion. "General Highway Map: Perry County, Alabama" (n.p., 1949); and Calvin D. Cowles, comp., *The Official Atlas of the Civil War* (Washington, 1891-1895; reprint ed., New York, 1958), plate CXLVIII.

<sup>36</sup>Craig, who was born Dec. 2, 1800 in Chester District, S.C., came, after a stay in Tennessee, to Dallas County with his family. He was elected County Court Clerk in 1828. He or a kinsman operated Craig's Ferry on the Cahaba River. John Hardy *Selma* (Selma, Ala., 1879; reprint ed., 1957), 181-182; and Walter M. Jackson, *The Story of Selma* (Birmingham, Ala., 1954), 35. Also see 102, 133, 140, 185, 186.

them an exhortation. nothing for my labours.

26th. Mon. I stayed here until after dinner, and then went in company with some of Mr. Craig's family to the other side of Cahaba River to one Mrs. Johnston's, where I had appointed to preach on Tuesday.

27. Tu. On this day there were a considerable number who attended at this place. The people were in appearance very much pleased, and would have me to stay another sabbath with them. I considered and did so.<sup>37</sup>

28th. W. I went up into Perry county, and stayed with one esq. Thomas Craig's. From Johnston's nearly up here there are large prairies the distance of 16 miles.

March 1st. Thur. This was a most tremendous day of thunder and rain. And consequently I stayed here another night and day.

2nd. Fri. By appointment we had sermon up here in 1½ miles of Craig's. There were but few out here this day. I went home with James Johnston and preached at his house by candle light, there were but few here also.

3rd. Sat. His family and I came down this evening to David Chesnut's in the settlement where I preached on Tuesday last.

4th. Sab. We all came up to Mrs. Johnston's. Here we collected a considerable congregation, and appeared much affected with the subject. I went home this evening with Col. and Dr. Johnston,<sup>38</sup> a distance of about 15 miles.

5th. Mon. This morning in company with the Rev. Alexander I started for the people of Covington County, came on and

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<sup>37</sup>Bryson apparently had been given directions for contacting members of his denomination already in the area. One of the four currently active A.R.P. churches in Alabama is at Marion Junction, near Selma.

<sup>38</sup>Bernard Johnson, "pioneer physician, legislator and militia colonel," built the first grist and saw mills in the area. He served in the legislature in 1826. According to the "Way Bill" (see below) he was an elder in Bryson's denomination, as was Thomas Craig (see above).

crossed Alabama River one mile above Portland. And then crossed pine barren Creek [*sic*], on the tole bridge. 121½ cents, and came on and stayed all night at a good old methodist brother who only charged us 75 cts. for our supper and horse feed etc.

6th. Tues. We came on this morning to Widow [Mrs. James (Mary Laird)] Bonner's<sup>39</sup> for breckfast 11 miles. Then we shortly separated and I went on to one Mag. Bovey's a formerly of Abbeville District South Carolina. I was well treated and charged nothing, living 2 miles from Belleville.

7th. Wed. This day I came on to one Bab's<sup>40</sup> store, here stopped and took dinner, was charged nothing, and then came on to MacFarlin's<sup>41</sup> an elder in the presbyterian church. Day

<sup>39</sup>The Bonners were part of a settlement of Bryson's coreligionists called Hamburg, near today's Oak Hill, to which heights they later moved when the lower location proved malarial. Bryson was apparently supposed to discuss with them the organization of a congregation. A church, Lebanon, was organized under the jurisdiction of his home presbytery, apparently before the end of the decade. It is no longer active, but Bethel Church at Oak Hill, which was founded as an off-shoot of Lebanon, is.

James Bonner (1753-1825), a veteran of the Revolution, is buried at "Old Hamburg" Cemetery, as is the "the widow (Mary Laird) Bonner" (1762-1832). Their daughters, Mary (1782-1862) and Margaret, married brothers, Joseph (1780-1861) and Robert Jones (1775-1856), respectively. The Joneses, whom Bryson also met, moved from South Carolina to Missouri at the time the Bonners came to Alabama, but after the death there of Margaret, they, too, came to Wilcox County and are also (except Margaret) buried at "Old Hamburg."

The William, James, and Samuel Bonners whom Bryson mentions were also among the elder Bonners' nine children. William, whose wife was Anne Lee Joel of South Carolina, came to Alabama at the same time as his parents. She died in 1842, and he and several of his children moved to Texas, where he is buried, sometime before 1851. James (m. Mary P. Foster of South Carolina) also came to Alabama with his parents, but because he disapproved of slavery and because he wanted educational advantages for his children, he later moved to Indiana. Samuel's wife was Sarah Hearst, also of South Carolina.

I am indebted for most of this information to the Widow Bonner's great, great granddaughter, the late Mrs. William J. (Joyce Carothers) Jones of Oak Hill, Alabama (letters, April 2 and June 19 and interview, April 15, 1979). More information about this settlement and its people are available in her books, *Bethel A.R.P. Church* (n. p., 1978) and *Bethel' Shadow* (Oak Hill, 1980). Birth and death dates cited here are from tombstones.

<sup>40</sup>Probably Rabb (see below). There is no Bab or Babb in the 1830 census for Conecuh County.

<sup>41</sup>Later (May 17) Bryson has "McFarlan." "James McFarlane" appears in the 1830 census. Census spellings are not reliable, however, so one of those in the text may be correct.

travel from Bovey's to Murder Creek, 10 miles. And 7 to Bab and 14 to McFarlin's.

8th. Th. After breckfast I came over - - - [presumably an illegible word in the manuscript] and came on to Mr. Mitchell's, the place appointed by synod, and stayed here this day and night.

9th. Fri. William Mitchell this morning went over to Josiah Bradley's and from that to Mathew [sic] B's where I stayed this night.

10th. Sat. I remained here until the breckfast was over and then went over to the Widow Bradley's, took dinner, stayed until evening, and then returned to Matthew Bradley's again this evening.

11th. Sab. This day was cloudy and very warm. I came to Mr. Mitchell's, the place intended for sermon to be at, found a small, but quite a respectable assembly of people. We had a quite pleasant day's meeting. I stayed here this night.

12th. M. This day I stayed with Mr. Mitchell's family and attended to my studies until evening, then went over to the widow Bradley's and then spent the evening and night.

13th. T. After breckfast we came over to Matthew Bradley's and about 12 o'clock, word came that Mr. Mitchell had returned from Pensicola [Pensacola], we then went over to see him and spent this night there.

14th. W. The male members met here this morning to see what they wanted, as to their church affairs, and after some time's conversation they requested some time to reflect on the subject, then asked me to return in a short period, and then they would have made up their mind on the subject. After this I left them and went on to one Mr. Rab's [William Rabb]<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup>William Rabb (b. Jan. 10, 1775 in Fairfield District, S. C.) settled at Rabbville or Rabb's Store five miles east of Evergreen on the post road from Greenville to Sparta in 1819. His wife was Sarah McDonald of Edgefield District, S. C. Owen, *History*, IV, 1404; William Leford, *People and Places of Conecub County, Alabama: 1816-1860* (Montgomery, 1970), 30; and Benjamin Franklin Riley, *History of Conecub County* (Columbus, Ga., 1881; reprint ed., ed. J. Vernon Brantley, Blue Hill, Me., 1964), 55-57, 89-90.



and stayed all night.

15th. Th. After breckfast I came in company with Mr. up to Mrs. Bonner's in Wilcox County. 25 miles.

16th. Fri. I left here after breckfast, and came on this day up to Mr. Joseph Jones' esq. son in law to widow Bonner. Here I passed this night.

17th. Sat. I remained here this day and night also.

18th. Sab. We had sermon at Robert Jones's this day after which I returned to Joseph Jones's.

19th. Mon. I went over to Robert Jones's and tarried with him this day.

20th. Tues. We went out to see some of the country, and after surveying some of the Pine Barren [Creek] land we returned and stayed all night here again.

21st. W. Mr. Jones and I went down to James Bonner's and here in company with Samuel Bonner, James, we took a sruvey [*sic*] of the land here. I stayed with James Bonner this night.

22. Th. After breckfast I left this, crossed Pine Barren river at Christian's ford, and went on to Dr. James W. Glenn's about 8 miles from the river, I found Glenn the same old thing yet as formerly.

23. Fri. This morning I went up to Portland a small town 3 miles from Glenn's on the Alabama River. Then returned to Jones's esq. 25 miles from this Joseph Jones's.

Sat. 24. I tarried all day here and made some preparation for the sabbath.

25. Sab. We had sermon at Robert Jones's. There were a considerable collection of people at this place.

26th. M. I came down in company with the widow Bonner

and her son Wm's family to her house, and there stayed this night.

27th. Tu. This morning I started for the people of covington [County] again. I went into the old federal road<sup>43</sup> 3 miles from here and went down it to ..... 2 miles, went in by ..... mills, and machine and stayed at Rab's.

28th. W. I came on to McFarlin's one mile from Jones' ferry on the Sepulga River. Visited his son in law's.

29th. Th. I came over the river and came on to D. Mitchell's.<sup>44</sup>

30. F. I went this day to Josiah Bradley's, stayed here this day and night.

31. Sat. I stayed here this day and night.

April 1st. Sab. We attended preaching at D. Mitchell's only a few collected.

2nd. M. I left here and started for Tallahassa [Tallahassee]. I went 8 miles to the falls of Conega [Conecuh] River, called Montazuma [Montezuma]<sup>45</sup> and here took the left hand going on east and noreast [sic] course 16 miles to Fagan's. 7 miles beyond this I took a little narrow path and went on to old Mr. Coon's, was charged nothing.

<sup>43</sup>Apparently the post road (see note 42), not the familiar "Old Federal Road" from Georgia to New Orleans.

<sup>44</sup>Apparently David Mitchell, a wealthy land and slave owner. He was a cousin of Josiah Bradley (see below) who was apparently an early county commissioner. According to the *Centennial History* (567) Salem Church was organized in Covington County in 1827 because of the heroic determination of one William J. Mitchell, although by 1835 it still had only nine members and it never had a permanent pastor in the whole 19th century. Unless there were two generations of William J. Mitchells, however, he would have been only about twenty years old in 1827. This suggests that there is confusion either in Bryson's account or the *Centennial History*. Probably David Mitchell was the founder of the church. Wyley Donald Ward, *Early History of Covington County, Alabama 1821-1871* (Huntsville, Ala., 1976), 26, 85, 123, 143, 160, 294, 299, 300.

<sup>45</sup>In Bryson's time Montezuma was a thriving town and the county seat of Covington, but it declined, at least in part because of a flood. Peter A. Brannon says it was "washed away" by the river. *Historic Highways in Alabama* (Montgomery, 1929), 26. In 1844 the legislature moved the county seat to Andalusia, a few miles to the east. Ward, *Covington County*, 146-150.

3. Tu. I came on to P. [Pea] River 8 miles, here I had to stay all day, because I could not get over. Mr. Linsey charged me 50 cents, for my horse, supper and ferriage.

4. W. This day I came through a vastly poor country, came into the old 3 notch road<sup>46</sup> and stopped at 2 o'clock at Clay bank [sic],<sup>47</sup> and preached this evening to a small company of people. — was charged 50 cents.

5. Thu. I came on to old Mr. Windham's,<sup>48</sup> — took breckfast, — was charged nothing. Then went on and crossed the Choctahatchey [Choctawhatchee] at ..... paid 6¼ cents and came on to old Mr. Miller's, a heard'sman [sic], and a very indifferent place in every respect, he made me pay him 75 cents.

6. Friday. I came on down the Chatahoochy [sic], took breckfast at one Mr. Pines, charged me 50 cents. I came on down to Brown's and stayed all night and paid nothing.

7. Sat. I crossed the chatahoochy [sic] and came on through

<sup>46</sup>A consistent number of blazes or notches was often used to mark roads in the days before numbered highway signs. There is some confusion about this "3 notch road," however. Brannon (*Adventures*, 56) and the "Historic Roads and Trails" map agree on the route of a road so named. It was cut in 1826 to move supplies from Ft. Barancas at Pensacola to Ft. Mitchell on the Chattahoochee. Its path ran north-east from Andalusia towards Troy and so was north of Bryson's route. It probably more or less followed an earlier road shown on Tanner's 1823 map "Georgia and Alabama" as the "Pensacola Road." Even so, Bryson probably would not have referred to a road reworked in 1826 as "old."

Another road, however, which may be the one shown on the "Historic Roads and Trails" map as the "Improved Road of 1819," bore the same name. One author refers to [Andrew] "Jackson's Three Notch Road," which "crossed Clay Bank Creek about 600 yards south of the present bridge on Alabama Highway 134 and about two miles south west of Daleville." Fred S. Watson, *Forgotton Trails* (Birmingham, Ala., 1968), 87. Brannon (*Adventures*, 27) describes an early road from Ft. Gaines to Claiborne and St. Stephens which seems to follow part of the same route, although he does not identify it with Jackson. At any rate, it is apparently the road which Watson describes that Bryson was following.

<sup>47</sup>The town of Clay Bank was one mile south of present-day Ozark. Watson, *Forgotton Trails*, 61. Bryson may have been there or at some other place on Clay Bank Creek. Brannon (*Adventures*, 28-29) says that Daleville was once called Clay Bank, and that location seems closer to the road Bryson followed.

<sup>48</sup>Census records list several Windhams in Dale County, but this was probably Daniel Windham, who lived "near the forks of the two Choctawhatchees." Watson, *Forgotton Trails*, 33.

a poor county and crossed spring creek [*sic*], charged 121½ cents, came on to flint River [*sic*] charged nothing. And stayed at another Brown's.

8. Sab. I came over to Mr. Donalson's but he was not home. I then went over to Mr. Young's, his nephue [*sic*] and stayed there, there being no opportunity of preaching.

9. Mon. Mr. Young came over with me to Mr. Donalson's, where I stayed this day and night. This is truly a rich and fertile part of the country. The land is a mixture, parts of it pine and other oak land. The country is high and dry, and some what broken. I suppose very healthy.

10th. Tu. I came over to Mr. John Bouie's,<sup>49</sup> a scotchman [*sic*], and here stayed until saturday [*sic*].

11th. 12th. 13. 14. Sat. This day I preached here to a small congregation.

15th. Sab. I went to David Bouie's and preached to a considerable congregation.

16th. Mon. In company with Mr. Little, I went through a very handsome section of the country along by Quincy, their county seat across Little River and to his house.

17. T. After Breckfast I started for Tallahassee, arrived there a short time after 1 o'clock, put up at Camron's tavern, and preached for these people at night. This is a handsome part of the country in which the town is situated, rich and fertile land lie all around it, in every direction. The town is as yet small, but increasing very fast. The people of this place, who are anything are mostly Methodist. However there are not many who care much about religion of any kind. The people here are a mixed multitude from the different states in the

<sup>49</sup>John Bouie and John Little (see below) are listed as among the original trustees of "Old Philadelphia Church," the first (1828) Presbyterian Church in Gadsden County. John C. Love (possibly the "Love" of May 5) surveyed the property. Later John and Daniel Bouie (see below) were early elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Quincy. Miles Kenan Womack, Jr., *Gadsden: A Florida County in Word and Pictures* (n.p., 1976), 49-50. For a list of land patents (1826-1830) including properties of Bouies, Loves, Youngs, and Nicholson (see below), see 295-297.

union. Twelve miles from this, back along the road I came is the notable Lake Jackson, the largest sheet of water I ever as yet have seen. It is 40 or 50 miles around it. There are vast quantities of fish in it.

18. W. I left here very early this morning in order to attend upon an appointment made at the Little's. The distance being 17 miles from here, there. This distance was accomplished in good time. But few people assembled. After sermon, I went to get my horse to go to Dr. Nickolson [Malcolm Nicholson],<sup>50</sup> and lo! he was stiff foundered. My feelings at this time were indescribable [*sic*]. My horse was so desperately bad, it did not appear as if he could possibly live, and I so far from home away in E. Florida. However I immediately set about doctoring him, and worked this evening and next morning until after breckfast. But having an appointment on Friday about 25 miles above, I started on foot this day (Thursday) to get there on tomorrow by the time for service, and did so with all care. I scarcely ever expected to see my horse alive, but thanks be to him who rules in heaven and on earth, and does all things well, my horse was spared with me. I went up to Wm. Donalson's and stayed all night. And next day, got up to Widow Donalson's in good time.

Th. 19.

20th. Fri. There were but few people out here this day. After sermon I came down to Young's, a son in law's of Widow Donalson's.

21. Sat. I came over to Wm. D's a short distance from the church and here stayed during the day.

22. Sab. This was a very wet day. The congregation was but small, but larger than what had been expected owing to the unfavorableness of the day. I came back to Wm. D's this night again.

23. M. In company with Mr. Little, I went down to John Bouie's, where I stayed until friday [*sic*], and being much

<sup>50</sup>One of the very early physicians in the Territory." A picture of his home, "Gadsden County's oldest residence, built in the mid-1820's," is in *Ibid.*, 15.



distressed with the toothake [*sic*], I went down to Dr. Nicholson's, where he relieved me by putting some oil of vitrael [vitriol] in it. I stayed here this night.

28. Sat. After breckfast I came back to John B's and here stayed until Sab.

29. Sab. We attended a Concord church. There was a large and respectable congregation here and apparently heard [*sic*] as if they wished to be benefited. After sermon I came on to Wm. D's.

30. Mon. This evening I went over to John Gray's, a methodist [*sic*], his mother was formerly of Mr. Rodger's church, fairfield [*sic*]. These appear to be good people.

1-2 May. Tues. I came over to Wm. D's and stayed until Thursday.

3-4 Th. Fr. I tarried at Daniel Bouie's. This family consists of husband and wife and 2 slaves, a very decent family.

5. Sat. I went over to Mr. loves [*sic*] and stayed there this day. This is about half a mile from B's.

6. Sab. We attended sermon at D. Bouies. There was a considerable congregation out this day, and the people appeared to be very much affected under the discourse. This night I went home with Mr. Canida, who lives in the Georgia side of the line.

7. M. This day I went on and crossed flint river, and spring creek, and the Chatahoocy [*sic*] to Mr. Brown's, who lives on the indian [*sic*] reserve, where I had an appointment to preach. There was a considerable number of people for the thinly settled part of the country. Among whom was [*sic*] Gen. [John] Clark<sup>51</sup> of Georgia, Dr. Jones of Chippoli, West Florida, who were travelers.

<sup>51</sup>John Clark (1766-1832), the son of Revolutionary War hero Gen. Elijah Clarke, was the leader of one of the two main political factions in Georgia in the early 1820's. He was twice governor (1819-1823) and was a major general in the state militia. In the year he heard Bryson preach he moved to Florida to serve as an Indian agent. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography* (20 vols., New York, 1930; reprint ed. in 11 vols., n.d.), II, pt. 2, 134-135.

8. Tu. I started this morning for the people of Cov. Cou. Ala. But having gone only 15 miles I was hailed by one McDonol [Daniel McDonald]<sup>52</sup> who lives on the road, and was allmost [*sic*] compelled to spend the day and preach for them in the evening. I consented and did so. And there was a considerable assembly collected. These people were all Methodists. The man that stopped me was himself a preacher among them and his son, and one of his Brothers, And the Circuit rider [*sic*] for preachers of them, and myself made the 8th. After sermon I went home with the same man again and stayed until morning.

9. This day I came on up to one Miller's and stopped and got my horse fed, and paid 25 cents. And came on by henry court house,<sup>53</sup> and on to the Block house on the Choctahatchey [*sic*] River,<sup>54</sup> and stayed all night, and was charged nothing.

10. Th. I came on this morning into the settlement where I preached going down at Clay Bank River, and took breckfast, and had my horse fed and paid 50 cents. And then came on to the settlement of the coon's on P. River [*sic*] there stayed all night, paid only for my horse feed 25 cents.

11. Fri. This day I came on to one Fag ..... took breckfast and paid 50 cents, and then came on to Mr. Josiah Bradley's. And I stayed in this settlement until next thursday [*sic*], and preached to them on the sabbath.

17. Th. This day I went over the sepulgas [Sepulga] R. to Mr. McFarlan's and stayed all night.

18. Fri. I went on this day through the vilage [*sic*] of Sparta, and on to Mag. Bouie's formerly of Abbeville, and stayed with them this night.

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<sup>52</sup>Daniel McDonald was the preacher of the area's Methodist circuit. Watson, *Forgotton Trails*, 165.

<sup>53</sup>Probably Abbeville, near the Ft. Gaines terminus of the 3-Notch Road Bryson mentions earlier. However, Old Richmond had been the county seat before Dale became a separate county and may have still been so called. *Ibid.*, 53. Note that in the "Way Bill" Bryson refers to "Henry *Old* Court House" (*italics mine*).

<sup>54</sup>An old fortified building, protected by rivers on two sides, about one and one-half miles northeast of Waterford. *Ibid.*, 33.

19. Sat. I went on to Ft. Claiborn [Claiborne] on the Alabama River where I spent the sabbath.

20. Sab. We had large assemblies on Saturday night, and on sabbath day and night too.

21. Mon. I came up to the Widow Bonner's.

22. I went up into the Jones' settlement and stayed here two sabbath days, until the 4 of June.

June Tu. 5. This day I left Sam Bonner's, and came on to Col. Johnston's [Johnson's] on the west side of the Ala. River. Where I stayed until 12th of June. We had sermon at his house on Sat., and at liberty [*sic*] on Sab. A meeting house in this settlement.

12th. Tu. I came up to Mr. Chesnuts, and stayed with him this night.

13. W. I came over to the Widow Johnston's, and stayed there until Sat. morning.

Sat. 16.

### WAY BILL

From Floriday [*sic*] Congregation to flint River [*sic*], Lamberts, thence to Spring Creek, Shepherds Ferry, thence to Mrs. Fairchilds — 33 miles, 1 good.

Cross Chattahoochy [*sic*] at Brown's Ferry, thence to Wood's Store — 20 miles midling fare.

$1\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from the store take the left hand to Henry Old Court House — 33 indifferent to Dick's Ferry on Choctahatchy [*sic*] — 7, stop at Wm. Turner's, good.

to Mr. John Kinimy<sup>55</sup> at Clay Bank Creek — 14 tollerable.

to Peerman's Ferry on Pea River — 32. Stop at Samuel Peerman's [Samuel W. Pearman]<sup>56</sup> (tollerable).

<sup>55</sup>Probably John Kimmey ("Kimmy" in the 1830 census), who lived on Clay Bank and who was the first sheriff of Dale County. *Ibid.*, 31, 33, 87.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-32.

to Edmund Wiggins, Covington County — 14, thence to Mount-  
 zuma [*sic*] Seat of Justice — 18  
 to the Bradley Settlements — 8 Mr. David Mitchell  
 to Ionespes [Jones's] Ferry Sepulga River, thence to Wm.  
 Rabbs [*sic*] in all — 19 miles good usage  
 to Niel McLanians a Presbeterian [*sic*] — 15  
 to Master Sawyers thence to Hudsons Mill  
 to Sollomon Sprawls — 32 tollerable  
 thence to James Bonners Esq. — 9 Also Reformed  
 thence Smiths Bridge on pine Baren Creek [*sic*] to Portland  
 on Alabama River to Col. Johnstons [Johnson's] 30 Elder of  
 Apse. Refmd. Church.  
 Thence to Wm. Johnstons — 16 miles  
 to Mr. Thos. Craigs Perry County — 25 Elder of Apse. Re-  
 formed  
 to Greensborough [Greensboro] — 14  
 thence to Tuscaloosa — 44 Miles  
 Cross Black Warrior River and then take the turn pike or  
 Boilers [Byler] Road.<sup>57</sup>  
 to Russelsville [Russellville] in Russels [*sic*] Valley 110 Miles  
 to Squire Hamiltons Member of the Apse. Reformed Church  
 9 Miles.  
 thence to Browns Ferry on Tennessee River<sup>58</sup> 40 miles (Horse  
 Boat  
 thence to Athens Seat of Justice Limestone County 12 Miles  
 Keep the Fayetteville Road 30 Miles then Enquire for Squire  
 Parkersons  
 Elder of Rev. Mr. Browns thence to Rev. Mr. Galloways Congre-  
 gation  
 Murry [Maury] County  
 thence to Centerville Hickman County 30 Miles on the Direction  
 of the Western District to James Mcneelys 20 M. Good fare,  
 thence to Reynoldsbrg [Reynoldsburg]<sup>59</sup> on Tennessee River —

<sup>57</sup>"Byler Road 1819" on the "Historic Roads and Trails" map.

<sup>58</sup>The site of the Brown's Ferry nuclear power plant. Tanner's "Georgia and Alabama" map shows the road from Russellville to Athens crossing the river at Marathon. The ferry route can be determined by examining the "Brown's Ferry Road" on the relevant U.S. Geological Survey Map (Hillsboro Quadrangle).

<sup>59</sup>Once the county seat of Humphreys County, located on the east bank of the Tennessee twelve miles below the mouth of the Duck River. The town site is now "largely under the waters of Kentucky Lake." Robert M. McBride and Owen Meredith, eds., *Eastin Morris' Tennessee Gazeteer, 1834 and Matthew Rhea's Map of the State of Tennessee 1832* (Nashville, 1971), 242, 242n.

28 Good fare.

Cross the River at Mr. Williams horse Boat

thence to Henry County Major Porters 27 M.

thence to Parris [Paris] — 11 Miles

thence to Dressden [Dresden] in Weekly [Weakley] County —  
25M.

to Mr. Nevel Linseys Obion County — 14 M Tollerable

thence to Mr. James Harpers — 14 Miles of the Apse. Refmd.



URBAN BOOSTERISM AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE  
NEW SOUTH: A CASE STUDY

by

Kenneth R. Johnson

An institution of higher learning generally adds prestige and economic strength to the community in which it is located. This fact in the nineteenth century often led officials and business leaders of a town to offer land, buildings, and money to induce institutions to move to their locale. Many small institutions had little if any endowment or public revenue support during this era; they had to survive on tuition from students and gifts. Struggling institutions sometimes eagerly sought offers of assistance and popular support and were ready to move to a new location "at the drop of a hat" if the offer were adequately attractive. Thus a supportive relationship of this nature between "town and gown," if successful, brought happy results for the institution and the community.

The rise of the new South in the late 19th century — with great emphasis on industrial, commercial, and urban growth — intensified these practices. Town promoters, real estate developers, business organizers, and community leaders, all eager for growth and profits, intensified their efforts to locate a college in their town. As their efforts sometimes failed, many boosters gave serious thought to building their own institution. This paper is a study of one such institution established as an integral part of the efforts of the boosters of Florence, Alabama, to add prestige and economic strength to their thriving town.

Florence, situated at the foot of the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River, never became the great commercial center envisioned by its founders in 1818. In the twenty years following the Civil War its population and economic life remained stagnant. Yet Florence possessed some prominence as an educational center.

The Florence Female Synodical College welcomed its first students in 1854. Its fortunes had suffered much during the

Civil War but the institution survived. By the late 1880's, it had over one hundred students, a good faculty, and adequate financial support. The Florence Normal School opened its doors in 1872, and the coeducational student body slowly increased. While primarily concerned with teacher training, it served also as a preparatory institution for many students entering other professions. There was no serious dissatisfaction with these institutions. No public demand was being made for another institution for high learning in Florence.

Yet readers of the FLORENCE WAVE learned in January, 1889, that a "Baptist University" would soon be moving to Florence. The short news item revealed that the institution would be endowed with \$800,000.<sup>1</sup> Although details were lacking, obviously some prior planning had been under way.

Actually there were two distant and seemingly unrelated events occurring which led to this announcement and eventually to the creation of a third institution of higher learning in Florence. The first event was the "Florence Boom." The second was the decision of the Alabama Baptists to move Howard College to a new location.

The "Florence Boom" was a burst of economic expansion and community growth that began in September 1886 when a group of Florence businessmen held a planning meeting to discuss the future of Florence. At this meeting Judge William B. Wood presented a plan for developing the natural advantages of the Florence area. He pointed out that much of the land north of Florence had iron ore which assayed about 52% to 74% pure metallic iron. The Warrior coal field lay about twenty miles to the south. These basic resources suggested that Florence could become a great iron producing center. He also pointed out that the Tennessee River provided an easy inexpensive means of transportation to other parts of the nation.

Both Wood and other members of the assembled group were well aware of the existence of a large supply of cheap labor in northwest Alabama. Those who were slow to grasp the vision of Florence as a bustling industrial commercial center, were

<sup>1</sup>Florence Wave, January 19, 1889.

referred to Birmingham which had progressed from a tiny community in 1870 to a booming city by 1886. Also, the town of Sheffield situated across the Tennessee River to the south of Florence was only two years old, but in that short time three iron furnaces were started, a bank organized, a hotel and numerous other businesses and private homes constructed. Land in Sheffield which sold for \$25 per acre as a cotton field in 1883 was in 1886 selling for \$1000 per city lot. The vision of Florence becoming a great metropolis and of men becoming fabulously wealthy caught on, and the Florence Boom was launched.<sup>2</sup>

To realize their dream, Wood and his associates organized the Florence Land, Mining and Manufacturing Company (FLMMC). Capitalized at \$300,000, this company, with Judge Wood as president, acquired title to 60,000 acres of land to the north of Florence along with many lots in the city. Most land-owners simply accepted stock in exchange for their land. This company became the main promoter in the "Florence Boom," although other individuals and businesses worked toward the same objective.<sup>3</sup>

In December 1886, one month after FLMMC was organized, Wood announced that three iron furnaces, one rolling mill, one stove foundry, and a brick company would soon be established in Florence. The boom was under way. As construction of these and other industries began, the population of Florence began to increase, commercial establishments began to thrive, and new businesses such as banks, hotels, and a savings and loan association were organized. To capitalize quickly on the boom and meet real needs of a growing community, the FLMMC held a gigantic land sale in April 1887. The company announced plans to sell 1000 building lots in or near Florence. All were

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, September 4, 1886 and February 5, 1887; The Florence Land, Mining and Manufacturing Company, *The Florence Land, Mining and Manufacturing Company* (Nashville, 1887), 11-17; S. R. Dennen, "The New South: Florence, Alabama," *New England Magazine* (February, 1890) 89-91; Joseph H. Nathan, "Town Building: The Case of Sheffield, Alabama," *The Journal of Muscle Shoals History*, III (1975), 65-74.

<sup>3</sup>*The Florence Land, Mining and Manufacturing Company*, 17-19; Herman Frederick Otte, *Industrial Opportunities in the Tennessee Valley of Northwestern Alabama* (New York, 1940), 21-23. Other officials in the company included investors from Florence, Nashville, Atlanta, Louisville, and Evansville (Indiana).

to be sold on a special easy payment plan. Advertisements of the sale covered the South. Prior to and during the sale, a comfortable wagon pulled by a team of white horses carried prospective buyers over the land offered for sale. A large brass band provided free entertainment. The promoters were not disappointed. People came by the hundreds. Lots sold fast, and often the price was 500% higher than six months earlier.<sup>4</sup>

While many investors came to Florence seeking opportunities, one eager investor, Dr. J. B. Hawthorne, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, seems to have been deliberately recruited. Dr. Hawthorne, a native Alabamian, had held pastorates in Selma, Montgomery, Louisville, New York City, and Richmond before Atlanta. He was a popular lecturer and an influential leader among the Southern Baptists. His attention was called to Florence by J. H. Field, president of the Florence Railway Company, and Dr. J. S. Lawton, editor of the *Christian Index*, both of whom owned stock in FLMMC and had other investments in Florence. They hoped to "utilize his (Hawthorne's) wide acquaintance with people of wealth and influence in the interest of the boomers of Florence." Hawthorne was eager to be used in this way. He first visited Florence in January, 1888. Shortly thereafter, he purchased land near Florence and invested in a number of existing businesses. He was elected to the Board of Directors of the North Alabama Furnace Company and the Florence Foundry and Land Company. He and a group of associates organized the College Hotel Company. Capitalized at \$20,000, this company constructed and operated the College Hotel which opened September 1, 1889. As his investments in Florence increased, Hawthorne decided to move to the area. After circulating rumors that his health had broken down, he resigned the Atlanta pastorate and moved to Florence occupying his newly constructed home christened "Hawthorne Heights," in early 1889. He was careful to reassure his friends that he was not leaving the ministry. He demonstrated this by constantly traveling and participating in church activities in Alabama and

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<sup>4</sup>Florence Wave, December 5, 1886 and April 30, 1887; *The Florence Land, Mining and Manufacturing Company*, 19-23; Washington Bryan Crumpton, *Book of Memories, 1842-1920* (Montgomery, Alabama, 1921), 207.

the South.<sup>5</sup>

As the boom grew, the economic wisdom of Hawthorne and other investors seemed to be confirmed. The Florence population, which stood at about 1,300 in 1886, was over 6,000 in 1890. The property tax base in Florence increased from \$800,000 in 1887 to \$2,875,000 in 1890. Taxes collected increased from \$2,800 to \$31,000 in the same period. Perhaps most typical of the growth was the fact that Florence had one bank in 1887, but four years later it had three banks and a savings, loan, and trust association.<sup>6</sup>

In this booming environment, the quiet halls of learning might have seemed out of place, but not so for the businessmen who envisioned students coming from all over the South, pouring thousands of dollars into the local economy. A study was widely circulated which reported that the institutions of higher learning in Nashville brought over two million dollars annually into the economy of that city. The Florence promoters were also aware that a prominent institution would publicize and bring prestige to the area. Hawthorne became the leading advocate of such an institution. According to him:

The companies engaged in building up the town (Florence) came to me and said they wanted to make some provision for education. They told me that if I would agree to take charge of the movement to establish a first class educational institution, they would deed me enough property to make the success of such institution assured. I answered that I was a Baptist, an uncomprising Baptist, and that if I took charge of the institution it would have to come under Baptist auspices. They promptly and cheerfully came to my terms and agreed that it should be a Baptist institution.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Florence Wave, December 18, 1886, October 22, 1887, January 28, 1888, March 10, 1888, June 16, 1888, June 1 and 29, 1889; Atlanta Journal quoted in Florence Wave, February 16, 1889; "Blast Furnaces in Florence, Alabama," The Journal of Muscle Shoals History, III (1975), 46-48; Mrs. George H. Maness, A History of the First Baptist Church, Florence, Alabama (Florence, Alabama, 1963), 8-10; Thomas McAdory Owen, History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography (Chicago, 1921), III, 774; The Alabama Baptist, February 16, April 26, May 31, November 11, 1888; Lauderdale County Deed Book No. 32, 285, 304, and 305.

<sup>6</sup>Florence Herald, August 2, 1890.

<sup>7</sup>Florence Wave, December 4, 1886 and February 27, 1889; Montgomery Alabama Baptist, March 7, 1889; Florence Herald, September 28, 1889.



Hawthorne had shown little interest in higher education prior to his arrival in Florence. But conditions existing among Alabama Baptists strongly stimulated that interest.

The Alabama Baptist Convention, meeting at Union Springs in 1887, decided to move Howard College away from Marion to a new location. A committee was appointed to select a site. Birmingham offered to donate \$100,000 and seven acres of land at East Lake to Howard College if it would move there. The people of Anniston also wanted a college and in July, 1887, offered \$27,850 cash, twenty acres of land near the heart of the town, 327 acres in the suburbs and fifty-five shares of stock all of which was valued at \$198,888. Other offers were made but none so generous as these. Florence showed only slight interest in the move at that time. Eventually the Birmingham offer was accepted and the move was made.<sup>8</sup>

This move created a great deal of bitterness and divided the Baptist community. One of the leading figures among the unhappy group was Judge Porter King, who had long been a member of the Howard College Board of Trustees. He originally opposed the move away from Marion. After the move was made, he became convinced that another move would be necessary because Birmingham was slow about paying the \$100,000. King was an investor in Florence and a good friend of Dr. Hawthorne. He is sometimes given credit for originating the idea of a Baptist College in Florence. It is certain that he urged the Florentines to erect a suitable building and to work for the movement of Howard to Florence.<sup>9</sup>

King was not alone in his belief that Howard College might have to move again. Dr. B. F. Riley, President of Howard, visited Florence many times. Riley was not eager to move, but he and others made plans to ask the State Baptist Convention to move Howard to Florence if Birmingham did not provide the promised financial assistance.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Florence Ware, July 30, 1887; Grace Hooten Gates, *The Model City of the New South, Anniston, Alabama 1872-1900* (Huntsville, 1978), 195.

<sup>9</sup>Crumpton, *Book of Memories*, 210-11; Owen, *History of Alabama*, III, 982; Louis Manly, *History of Judson College 1838-1914* (Atlanta, n.d.) 81-84.

<sup>10</sup>Richard C. Sheridan, "The Baptist University of Florence, Alabama," a paper presented before the Tennessee Valley Historical Society, July 15, 1973. A copy is in the Tennessee Valley Historical Society Collection, Wesleyan Archives, Florence, Alabama.

Dr. Hawthorne strongly encouraged this kind of thinking as he preached, lectured, and visited Baptist friends. Growing concern in Birmingham led the editor of the *Age Herald* to print a long article asking "Is Birmingham going to let Dr. Hawthorne come along and boom Howard College from us?" In reply to this editorial, Hawthorne, speaking at the Opera House in Birmingham, stated that a college was an assured thing in Florence. With reference to Howard College, he claimed that there was no desire to interfere with it and hoped it would thrive at East Lake. But if it should fail there, Florence was prepared to give it a permanent home. Hawthorne explained that very soon a company would be formed in Florence to carry on the educational project. The company would offer Howard College a building valued at \$100,000 and an endowment of equal value if it would move to Florence. But if Howard did not accept the offer, the company would establish an institution equal in quality to Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Hawthorne expressed the belief that with "the cooperation of our brethern through the country" the institution would become one of the largest of its kind in the South. The Florence newspaper somewhat piously and prematurely maintained that Birmingham had had its chance and failed. The paper stated that a college would "be a blessing" to Florence and the entire section of North Alabama, but Birmingham would hardly feel the loss.<sup>11</sup>

In late February 1889 the Florence Educational Land and Development Company was chartered, and in April it was officially organized. Its stated purpose was to erect, establish, and endow a college or other institution of learning in or near Florence to receive, hold, and sell property of all kinds; to survey, plot, and lay off its lands into streets; and to build houses on its land. It was also authorized to promote the establishment of street railways, water works, gas works, and industrial plants of any and every description. Hawthorne was president of the company, Judge Porter King was vice president, and J. C. Featherston of Lynchburg, Virginia, was secretary-treasurer. The company was capitalized at \$300,000 with three thousand shares of stock at a par value of \$100 each. Four thousand dollars worth of stock was sold in Florence on

<sup>11</sup>Florence *Wave*, January 26, February 4, 1889.

the first day of sale. According to the newspaper, this showed the great popularity of the whole enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

At the time of its formation, the Educational Company received large gifts of real estate and stock from the promoters of Florence. The promoters expected that the development and sale of this land would bring in enough money to build the college and create a substantial endowment. In addition, Hawthorne promised to spend four or five years working to secure gifts and bequests until a half million dollar endowment was established. The educational company opened offices in the Bliss Building in Florence. Mr. A. C. Bruce of Bruce and Morgan, architects of Atlanta, was retained to draw up plans and specifications for the new college building. In early May the blueprints were complete and on display for public inspection. It was confidently reported that work on the foundation of the building would start in June.<sup>13</sup>

Faced with the growing possibility that Howard College might move to Florence, the *Birmingham Age Herald* announced that, "It is a matter of giving. If the citizens [of Birmingham] come up to the necessities of the hour, then Howard College is a fixture as an institution in this community. If the work fails, then Florence goes before the next Baptist State Convention with her proposition."<sup>14</sup>

Actually there was little cause for concern. Construction of the proposed building did not start in June, 1889, as originally planned and then to the complete surprise of the Florentines, Hawthorne announced that he had agreed to resume the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta which had not been filled during his absence.

There was much speculation that Hawthorne had become disappointed with Florence. While expressing surprise at the public interest in his activities, Hawthorne explained that he

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, April 6, 1889; Lauderdale County Chancery Court Final Record Book R, 206, 220. B. F. Riley of Birmingham, T. T. Eaton of Louisville, Porter King of Marion, E. B. Cornly of Florence, and J. H. Field of Florence; Lauderdale County Deed Book No. A-35, 203.

<sup>13</sup>Florence *W'ave*, February 27, March 6, 13, May 6, June 26, 1889.

<sup>14</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald* quoted in Florence *W'ave*, April 6, 1889.

left Atlanta because of his health. Now that it was recovered, he was ready to return to full time ministry. He also expected to continue his active interest in Florence. It was pointed out that the educational company owned 250 acres of land, some fine building lots in the center of town, and \$70,000 worth of stock in various companies. This wealth plus the capital stock in the educational company, seemed to form an economic foundation on which a college could be built.<sup>15</sup>

But appearances were deceiving and Hawthorne was less than candid. There were indications that Birmingham would meet its financial obligation to Howard College. The Alabama Baptists were showing little interest in moving Howard College to Florence. Also, the Hawthorne's influence was not as great as expected. After three months, only \$10,000 worth of the company's capital stock had been sold. While Florence was still in an economic boom, the pace was slackening. The land and stock owned by the educational company was not worth the original estimated value, and even its true value was declining.<sup>16</sup>

Although Hawthorne claimed no disappointment with Florence and promised to continue his work to establish a college, his actions told a different story. In September, 1889, a contract was signed by which the assets of the educational company were turned over to the Florence Land, Mining, and Manufacturing Company. The latter company agreed to complete the college building within twelve months. Hawthorne, according to the contract, was to remain at the head of the project and work actively to build an endowment.<sup>17</sup>

But his profiteering urge was stronger than his commitment to the proposed institution. Just before relinquishing control of the educational company, Hawthorne sold fifty acres of personal property to the educational company for \$25,000 which netted him a substantial personal profit.<sup>18</sup> A few months after

<sup>15</sup>Florence *Wave*, August 10, 21, 1889; Atlanta *Journal* quoted in Florence *Wave*, July 17, 1889.

<sup>16</sup>Florence *Herald*, September 28, 1889. There was serious question as to whether or not the company had been legally organized according to the terms of the Charter.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Lauderdale County, Lauderdale County Deed Book A-38, 3-4.

returning to Atlanta, he sold his home and other properties in the Florence area. The whole educational project was further hurt in January, 1890, when Porter King died. Thus the two strongest supporters of the proposed Baptist institution were removed.<sup>19</sup> Religious motivation ceased to be an influence at this time, thereby making the proposed institution merely a promoter's dream.

Once the college project came under the direction of the original promoters, Wood and his associates moved forward. Building plans drawn by the earlier architect were discarded and F. L. Rousseau, a local architect, was employed. He quickly produced plans for a building which duplicated plans he had drawn for Judson College. It was decided that the building would be erected on a seven acre campus located at the intersection of Seymore and Sherrod Streets about one and one-half miles north of the center of Florence. In January 1890 construction began. As the foundation neared completion in June, an elaborate ceremony was planned for the laying of the cornerstone. Dignitaries from all over the South were invited to attend. But this ceremony, an omen of the future, had to be cancelled when most of the invited guests could not be present.<sup>20</sup>

While construction was under way, Hawthorne occasionally visited the area and sometimes brought business and religious leaders to observe the educational work. He often preached in local churches and some times gave public lectures on such topics as the theories of Charles Darwin, ethics, the tariff, and labor questions. On one occasion, he was quoted as saying that his highest ambition was to build and endow a grand institution of learning and that his dream was coming true. Actually he had a declining influence on the course of events.<sup>21</sup>

In late 1890, the building was completed. In Renaissance style of architecture, it measured 220 feet long and 121 feet wide. It had a mansard roof topped by one central dome and

<sup>19</sup>Florence *Herald*, January 18, 25, 1890; Manly, *History of Judson College*, 84. During this early period, the planned institution of higher education was often referred to as the Baptist College, Baptist University, Hawthorne College, and the Southern Baptist University, but most often simply "the college."

<sup>20</sup>Florence *Herald*, January 29, June 7, 11, September 6, 1890.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, April 26, July 11, August 8, September 1, October 24, 1890.



two wing domes. The central dome was over 100 feet high with a flag pole 28 feet high extending from it. The first floor consisted of a chapel which would seat 750 people, sixteen recitation rooms, and a dining room. The second floor had thirty-eight rooms with two sets of bathrooms and water closets in each wing of the building. The third floor was the dormitory containing fifty bedrooms. A large room, 41 by 41 feet, under the big dome was used as the gymnasium. The entire building was equipped with the modern Snead system of heating and ventilation with registers in each room. This was one of the highest, most modern, and most beautiful buildings in north-west Alabama.<sup>22</sup>

As the building neared completion, steps were actually taken to organize a college. In February, 1891, the Rev. L. D. Bass was named president of the new institution. Dr. Bass, a native of South Carolina, had earned an outstanding reputation in Alabama and other parts of the country as a preacher and lecturer. In 1889 the University of Alabama had conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity. The following year, he became a pastor of the First Baptist Church in Huntsville. He had displayed much interest in education, and while at Huntsville had organized the Alabama Military Academy. Although Bass was a prominent Baptist, all thought of moving Howard College to Florence had been abandoned. Yet fears existed that the two institutions would compete for students and financial gifts. Dr. B. F. Riley seemed to express this concern when he warned that, "In the multiplication of institutions of learning there is always the danger of strenuous competition for patronage which may result in the depression of standards of general education." To avoid competition with Howard College, an all boys school, and establish an institution with wide appeal, Dr. Bass organized the Southern Female University (SFU). It would, according to Dr. Bass, be nonsectarian and yet possess all the advantages of a religious-sponsored institution.

Shortly after his own appointment, Dr. Bass announced the appointment of R. E. Binford as Chancellor. Binford, a native of Virginia, had been connected with several institutions

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, November 5, 1890.

and was president of the Baptist Female College in Lexington, Missouri, prior to coming to Florence. He was the first professional educator connected with the educational project; others were quickly added. By midsummer, nineteen faculty members were employed, sixteen of whom were women. Mrs. Kate Donegan, from one of the oldest families in Huntsville, was appointed matron. Miss Salle Collier, who had once been president of the Florence Female Synodical College, also became a member of the faculty.<sup>23</sup>

The organizational structure was completed by the creation of a Board of Trustees to help administer the university. This board included Governor Thomas Watts, Senator John Tyler Morgan, John Coons, H. R. Stoughton, B. H. Crompton, John Thigpen, and A. W. Stockwell of Alabama; Governor W. J. Northern of Georgia; the Rev. Edgar E. Falk, W. W. Woodruff, and Josiah Patterson of Tennessee; W. H. Jack of Louisiana; Leslie Wagganer of Texas; and the Rev. J. J. Phelps of Michigan. Although these appointments to the board were well publicized, there is no indication that the Board ever met or had any part in the decision making of the University. It seems that these men were merely lending their prestige to a struggling institution which if successful would add to their own fame.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Dr. Bass was given complete freedom and responsibility for operating the university.

Other arrangements were being made. More than \$15,000 was spent on "school apparatus, furniture and pianos. . . ." Plans were made to accomodate 150 girls during the first academic year although the new building would house four hundred. A high fence was placed around the campus to protect the large number of young ladies expected from all over the South.

On September 15, 1891, the university formally opened. On the first day, sixty-three students, representing Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and

<sup>23</sup>Florence *Times*, May 31, 1890, September 26, October 17, 1891; Montgomery *Alabama Baptist*, June 18, July 30, 1891, June 30, 1892; Minutes, Fourth Annual Session, Florence Baptist Association, Pleasant Valley Church, Lauderdale County, Alabama, July 31-October 2, 1891.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, July 4, 1891; Crompton, *Book of Memories*, 212.

Florida, were registered. Additional students came. The total enrollment was about 125. All students wore uniforms, and each had to pay \$89.50 for a half term. This amount included room, board, and tuition. School officials claimed that these rates were lower than the rates at any other girls' school which offered equal advantages. Apparently most of the young ladies attending the university were moderately wealthy. An exception was a young lady who was "brave enough to work her way" through the University by "keeping some rooms in order." Her determination in spite of the lack of money so impressed other students that they collected \$25 to buy her a uniform.<sup>25</sup>

The university offered five programs or "courses," three of which led to degrees. The Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Letters programs lasted three years. They were similar, except the latter made Latin and Greek optional and placed more emphasis upon modern language, English history, and literature. The Masters of Arts was a seven-year program in which the first three years were the same as for the B.A. program. Thereafter, emphasis was placed in Latin, Greek, mathematics, music and art, but other areas of study such as modern language, history, literature, and science received some attention. The non-degree programs were the most innovative and indicative of the changing economic needs of women in modern society. A business course lasted two years. It involved the study of penmanship, single and double entry bookkeeping, civil and commercial law, typewriting, telegraphy, and stenography. The modern-day elective system in which students decide which courses to take, did not prevail, yet the university came close to this innovation. An elective course was offered for a one year duration. It was designed to meet the needs of those whose "time and opportunities are restricted." A student in this program could plan a program made up of studies selected from any other programs being offered. A certificate was granted to those completing the last two programs.<sup>26</sup>

As the school year got under way, regular preaching services were arranged in the chapel. The Rev. T. P. McCarley of the Methodist Church in Florence preached the first sermon. A

<sup>25</sup>Florence *Times*, July 4, September 12, 19, 26, 1869.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, July 4, 1891; Safford Berney, *Handbook of Alabama* (Birmingham, 1892), 237-39.

series of lectures and music recitals was started also. Students were required to attend; the public was usually invited. In January, 1892, the fall term ended with an address by Governor James S. Hogg of Texas. Dr. Bass predicted that the enrollment would increase to 150 in the spring. Numerous newspapers over the South carried articles about the university. A Chattanooga newspaper called SFU the "Queen of Southern Institutions," while another labeled it the "Vassar of the South." Enrollment did increase. The university seemed to be further strengthened in May when Dr. Bass announced that arrangements had been made for the Union Female College of Eufaula, Alabama, to merge with SFU in the fall.<sup>27</sup>

The first academic year ended with a well-planned commencement that must have made conservative patrons feel comfortable. On May 29, W. L. Pickard, a Baptist minister from Birmingham, in delivering the commencement sermon, described woman "as the crowning work of creation, the compliment of man and the handmaid of the Christ Jesus in lifting a fallen world." The Rev. R. J. Willingham of Memphis followed the same theme in his commencement address which was entitled "The Chief Adornment of Women — Beauty of Character."<sup>28</sup>

Although the first year ended on a successful note, the University was experiencing problems. It had been expected that the city water system which had been organized only a few months earlier would serve the University. But the city had failed to render this service, and there was little chance that it would in the future. Dr. Bass announced that a well would be drilled and water for the University would be drawn by a windmill. Also, the streetcar company had promised to extend a line out to the University. By June 1, it was extended only to Seven Points (about one-half mile from the University); and no further construction was planned. This condition was made worse by the lack of paved streets or even sidewalks between the University and Seven Points.<sup>29</sup> Dr. Bass received no help in solving these problems from the city officials, the railroad company, or FLMMC. Bass was left to operate the

<sup>27</sup>Florence Times, September 26, October 10, December 26, 1891; July 23, May 5, 1892.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, May 14, June 4, 1892.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, July 16, 1892.

institution as best he could without the strong financial and moral support of any single prominent person or group in Florence.

Perhaps most disturbing was the fact that most Florentines did not send their daughters to the University. Some local critics claimed that the girls were given too much liberty. The *Florence Times* tried to answer these critics by pointing out that young ladies in a university were not young pupils as in a female college. University life was different from college life. "Our own wives and daughters go about the streets, making purchases and greeting acquaintances and this same kind of privilege must be granted to the University students." The newspaper added that most students were in the college rather than the University and these younger, less experienced students were always in the presence of a teacher when on the street, in church, or even in a parlor, "just like our old institution's."<sup>30</sup>

In the summer of 1892, plans were made for the second year. Dr. Bass predicted that enrollment would double. Two new teachers were added to the music faculty, thereby stimulating the claim that the music department was one of the best in the South. One generous contributor to the institution was former President Grover Cleveland. His contribution resulted in a full scholarship being granted to a young lady, Miss Jennie Carlen of Michigan. The second academic year at SFU began with a deceiving calmness and outward appearance of success. Enrollment was higher than the first year and other conditions pointed toward continued growth. These conditions merely added to the shock and surprise felt by Florentines when on October 7th, Dr. Bass announced that SFU was leaving Florence and moving to Birmingham.<sup>31</sup>

The move, like the university itself, was the result of business promoters' activities. Dr. Henry Martin Caldwell, a physician and prominent Presbyterian layman, became president of the Elyton Land Company in 1876 and was an investor in many other businesses in the Birmingham area. In the mid 1880s he established the Lakeview Park in Birmingham which

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, June 4, 1892.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, September 3, 10, 17, 1892; *Florence Herald*, August 25, 1892.



was intended to be a summer resort area. The one hundred acre park included a lake with boats and a swimming bath, a number of conservatories, a casino, bowling alleys, skating rinks, ornate cottages and the magnificently furnished Lakeview Hotel. The hotel, overlooking the lake, could accommodate 320 guests. Each room had electric lights, running water and an electric bell. To insure easy access to the park, Caldwell extended two street car lines which he owned from the downtown area to the park. While the Lakeview Hotel was often filled and served some of the most prominent people in America, it simply failed as a profit making venture. With this condition prevailing, Dr. Caldwell and his associates decided to cut their losses and at the same time enhance the chances of success of their other investments. In this connection Caldwell offered the Hotel, fully equipped and seven acres of land to Dr. Bass rent free for five years if SFU would occupy the Hotel. Apparently Caldwell also arranged for and absorbed the cost of moving the entire University from Florence to Birmingham.<sup>32</sup>

In response to this offer, Dr. Bass consulted the faculty but did not consult the SFU trustees, the officials of FLMMC, community leaders, or the students. Although a few faculty members refused to make the move, a majority did agree to go to Birmingham. It was at this point that Dr. Bass announced that the move would be made. One week later, on October 14, the students with their possessions were transported from their north Florence campus across the Tennessee River to the Sheffield railroad depot where they boarded a special train for the trip to Birmingham. A large crowd saw the girls off. But no organized effort was made to prevent the move. By late 1892, the Florence Boom was rapidly declining. While some businesses were prospering, the iron furnaces simply were not profitable. New industries and business were not being established and land values were declining. Thus Wood and his associates could do little to counteract the coniving action of Dr. Bass and the Birmingham businessmen. According to one newspaper, several thousand people greeted the

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<sup>32</sup>John C. Henley, Jr., *This is Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1969), 68-74; James F. Sulzby, Jr., *Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts* (University, Alabama, 1960), 87-89, 167-69; Owen, *History of Alabama*. II, 284.

students and faculty when they arrived in Birmingham.<sup>33</sup>

The sadness felt by some Florentines soon changed to relief. Within two months after the departure, rumors began to drift back to Florence about an improper relationship existing between Dr. Bass and one of the students. By late November, the scandal was in the Florence and Birmingham newspapers. Dr. Bass, proclaiming his innocence, demanded a full investigation students and of entering her room late one night against her wishes. While many rumors and different versions of the incident circulated, there was common agreement that Dr. Bass had been guilty of bad judgment if not immoral conduct. Dr. Bass, proclaiming his innocence, demanded a full investigation to clear his name. In conjunction with the faculty, he selected seven leading ministers and church laymen to conduct the investigation. Dr. H. M. Caldwell was chairman of the group. The investigating committee questioned faculty and students nearly all one night and all the next day. A report was quickly issued exonerating Dr. Bass. According to the report, the young lady was angry with Dr. Bass for withholding her letters and had told the story of his coming into her room late at night in order to embarrass him and get revenge. The student and many of her friends, some of who had testified that they saw Dr. Bass in the room, denied the accuracy of the report and accused the committee of wanting to save the reputation of Dr. Bass, a fellow minister, at the cost of the young lady's reputation. The public furor was so great the committee did recommend that Dr. Bass give up the presidency of the university, but remain in charge of finances. Dr. Bass accepted this recommendation but public confidence was so shaken that after another month he resigned all connections with the institution.<sup>34</sup>

Just as Dr. Bass left the university, the planned merger

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, October 13, 20, 1892. There was hope expressed in Sheffield that while the University was moving around perhaps it would settle there. See *Sheffield Reaper*, October 17, 1892. Apparently, Dr. Hawthorne had lost all interest in SFU long before it moved from Florence but not his interest in higher education. In 1896, he helped organize and accepted for a brief time the presidency of the Southern Baptist College for Women at Manchester, Georgia; see *Florence Times*, August 25, 1894.

<sup>34</sup>*Florence Herald*, December 1, 17, 22, 31, 1892. Dr. Bass' touch with immorality was not so brief. In 1901, he was charged in federal court with using the United States mail for fraudulent purposes. After being found guilty, he was fined \$1,000 and sentenced to three years in prison; see *Florence Times*, May 26, 1901.

with Union Female College of Eufaula took place. About sixty students and the business manager, H. G. Lamar, of that institution came to the SFU campus. Mr. Lamar became the business manager of SFU and Misses Eliza and Corinne James became the principals. The total enrollment of SFU now exceeded two hundred. Quiet returned to the campus of the struggling university, but not for long. In December 1893, the Lakeview Hotel burned to the ground. One young lady was burned to death while another was seriously hurt.<sup>35</sup> The flames not only destroyed life but consumed the SFU property all of which was uninsured and also brought an end to the support from Caldwell and his business associates. The end of the University seemed to be obvious.

But not so. Other promoters were standing ready to give the University a home and support in return for the economic and prestige value it could bring in return. The Woodstock Iron Company, through the efforts of Samuel Noble, J. M. McKleroy, and other business leaders in Anniston, Alabama, had built the Anniston Inn and opened it to the public in 1885. In 1888 the Inn came under control of the Anniston City Land Company. By late 1893 this thoroughly modern, magnificently furnished Inn was "suffering from a lack of guest." This condition combined with a long standing desire by local leaders to have a college in their area led them to invite the SFU officials to move to Anniston. The Anniston City Land Company offered SFU a five year rent free lease on the Inn and the towns citizens raised \$1000 for the University treasury.<sup>36</sup>

In January, 1894, about one month after the fire in Birmingham, SFU opened in Anniston, Alabama. Shortly after the move, the Anniston Conservatory of Music and Art merged with SFU to provide a more extensive program for their students. Also SFU was reorganized under the direction of Dr. John W. Abercrombie. A new and expanded board of trustees was created which consisted of prominent men from all parts of the South. In 1896 Dr. Abercrombie became president of the college and served to 1899. Under his leadership the name

<sup>35</sup>Florence Times, December 23, 30, 1893; Sulzby, *Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts*, 270.

<sup>36</sup>Gates, *The Model City of the New South*, 194-96; Sulzby, *Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts*, 18-23.

was changed to Anniston College and enrollment gradually increased until 1899 when it stood well over two hundred. Dr. A. J. Battle became president in 1899 and served until 1906. During this period the enrollment and financial resources declined. Dr. Clarence Julian Owens served as president from 1906 to 1909 when the institution which originated and thrived on religious discontent and business promoters' dreams of great profits closed permanently.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Southern Female University *Catalogue*, 1894-95; Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 51; III, 115; IV, 1312; Gates, *The Model City of the New South*, 196-7.

## A LYNCHING BEE: BUTLER COUNTY STYLE

by

Juanita W. Crudele

There were 1,395 known lynchings in the United States during the last decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Most of these executions without trial took place in the lower South. A few cases of multiple lynchings were recorded and occasionally a woman was lynched, but in April, 1895, a lynching occurred in rural Alabama that combined these features. The event made national as well as state news.

Reports of the crime were printed on the front pages of the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Washington Post*. Southern newspapers that provided page one coverage included the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, and the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*. Although rivaled by atrocity stories from Cuba and horror tales of urban murders, accounts of the Alabama lynching were more than just another example of the sensationalism so prominent in the urban journalism of the 1890s. Yet the embellishments were typical. In bold, half-inch type the *Washington Post* reported: "Hanging By the Neck — Lynching of Five Negroes in Greenville, Ala." The article identified the victims as John Rattler, Zeb Colley, Martha and Alice Greene, and Mary Dean.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Post* account another potential victim escaped. Attempting to establish a motive for the lynchings, the *Post* reported that the five blacks met their deaths for the alleged murder and cremation of Watts Murphy, a nephew of a former Alabama governor.<sup>3</sup>

Butler County, scene of the multiple horror, was located less than fifty miles from Montgomery, the state capital. The county was created in 1819 by an act of the legislature from territory taken from Conecuh county.<sup>4</sup> It was named for

<sup>1</sup>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (New York, 1919), Appendix I, hereafter referred to as NAACP.

<sup>2</sup>*Washington Post*, April 22, 1895.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>Saffold Birney, *Hand-Book of Alabama* (Birmingham, 1892), 272.



William Butler, one of the county's first settlers who was killed by Indians near Butler Springs in 1818. Among the early settlers of the county were the Watts and the Murphy families. They came to Alabama in 1819 and settled in the western part of the county near Butler Springs. Both pioneering families established successful farms and were active in county affairs. These families were the maternal and paternal grandparents of Watts Murphy.<sup>5</sup>

Butler County lay just south of Alabama's famous black belt. Though there were some large land holdings in Butler, they were not on the same scale of her northern neighbors. The soil of the county's 782 square miles was fertile for the most part, although by 1895 the use of commercial fertilizers was necessary. Though no river flowed through the county, it was well watered by numerous creeks and timber was abundant.<sup>6</sup>

In 1890, Butler County had a population of 21,641. Whites slightly outnumbered blacks by 11,168 to 10,273.<sup>7</sup> The county seat was Greenville with a population of 2,806.<sup>8</sup> There were a number of smaller communities throughout the county. In the south Georgiana had a population of almost 2,000, and Butler Springs to the west with a population of nearly 1,000.<sup>9</sup>

The county was served by the Mobile and Montgomery division of the Louisville and Nashville railroad. Thirty-four miles of track were inside the county's boundaries.<sup>10</sup> Sixty-eight miles of telegraph wires hastened Butler's communications with other parts of the United States.<sup>11</sup>

There were two newspapers in Greenville in 1895. The county's Democratic mouthpiece was the *Greenville Advocate*

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Biography* (Chicago, 1921), 200; also Marilyn D. Hahn, *Butler County in the Nineteenth Century*.

<sup>6</sup>Birney, *Hand-Book of Alabama*, 272-273

<sup>7</sup>*United States Census*, 1890 (Population), 489.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, Part I, 52.

<sup>10</sup>Birney, *Hand-Book of Alabama*, 272-273.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>Thomas M. Owen, *Alabama Official and Statistical Register*, 1907 (Montgomery, 1907), 293.

edited and published by J.B. Stanley. Colonel James Whitehead's newspaper, *The Living Truth*, was dedicated to the politics of agrarian reform. There was only one bank: Joseph Steiner & Sons served the banking needs of Butler's citizens from its location in Greenville.<sup>13</sup>

Butler's leading products were lumber, cotton, corn, tobacco, sweet potatoes, and livestock.<sup>14</sup> In 1889, 47,589 acres had been given over to the growing of cotton. The results were 18,200 bales valued at \$865,869. Corn was planted on 31,662 acres that same year and the yield was 415,141 bushels.<sup>15</sup> Most of Butler's farmers did not own their own land. The 1890 census statistics on Farms and Homes classified 59.55 per cent of the county's farming families as tenant farmers.<sup>16</sup>

Times had been hard for rural Alabamians since the Civil War and Butler County people were no exception. In the last two decades of the century farmers began to fight back at a system that kept them in constant debt. The fight began with membership in organizations seeking agricultural reform such as the Farmer's Alliance. Later, in an attempt to promote candidates who promised to support reform legislation, many of these same farmers joined the Populist Party. The reform candidates for governor carried Butler County in the gubernatorial elections of 1892, 1894, and 1896.<sup>17</sup> Blacks as well as whites were interested in improving their condition through organization. As early as 1889 there were thirteen Colored Alliances in Butler County.<sup>18</sup>

Violence was not unusual in the rural South, and again Butler county was no exception. Punishment for violent crimes was not always left to the duly elected officials of the law. Frequently mobs expedited matters by administering their own brand of justice. Rarely was a member of a lynch mob persecuted. Blacks far outnumbered whites as victims in southern

<sup>13</sup>Birney, *Hand-Book of Alabama*, 544.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 272-273.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*United States Census*, 1890 (Report on Farms and Homes), 32.

<sup>17</sup>William W. Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion. Agrarianism in Alabama, 1865-1896* (Baton Rouge, 1970), 223, 284, 315.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 143.

lynchings. Butler County citizens paid scant attention to color when it came time to punish violent offenders. In 1892, two white men, known locally as Hipp and Kelly, terrorized the county with armed robberies and murders. They were captured, but before they could be tried a local mob seized them from their captors and lynched both of them. Their bodies decorated either side of the courthouse for several days as a grim threat to potential offenders.<sup>19</sup> County residents barely had time to forget the horrors of that outrage when the 1895 atrocity occurred.

Watts Murphy came from a distinguished family. His mother's brother, Thomas Watts, had served as the state's Civil War governor and also as Attorney General in the Confederate Cabinet. His father, Augustus Murphy, was a successful planter. Not much is known about young Watts Murphy, but he is listed in the county's marriage statistics. He and Ida Hawkins applied for a marriage license on September 10, 1890, and the couple was married the following day by the Reverend S. Moore of Stringfellow, Alabama, at the home of Ambrose Murphy.<sup>20</sup>

The young Murphys made their home near Butler Springs. On Wednesday, April 17, 1895, Watts Murphy was working in a field near his home. Six of his field hands were there. Early in the afternoon Watts' father rode over to see him, but was told by the workers that he had gotten on his mule a little earlier and had ridden off somewhere. Murphy accepted the explanation at the time. Later Murphy said that he had specifically ridden over to the work site because he was afraid that his son might be having some trouble with some of his black laborers.<sup>21</sup>

Two days later (Friday) the mule came home alone. By this time the family was worried, and they and their neighbors had begun to search for the young man. Augustus Murphy knew that his son and some of the blacks working for him were not on the best of terms. He suspected foul play. One

<sup>19</sup>NAACP, 44; also Butler County Historical Society File, Greenville Public Library.

<sup>20</sup>Butler County Marriage Record, Volume L., 192, Probate Office, Butler County Court House, Greenville, Alabama.

<sup>21</sup>Greenville *Advocate*, April 24, 1895; *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 22, 1895

of the field hands, Zeb Colley, whose family had been with the Murphy family since before the Civil War, was taken into custody. According to Augustus Murphy, Colley broke down and confessed to the crime and implicated the other field hands.<sup>22</sup>

Colley recreated the events of Wednesday. In the field where they were working, Watts Murphy sat down to rest on a nearby log. John Rattler, who was chopping sprouts with an axe, slipped up behind Murphy and struck him a heavy blow on the head. The blow caused Murphy to lose consciousness, but did not bring immediate death. The field hands then took the body and placed it between two logs and piled brush and more logs on top of the heap. Then they set the brush on fire. Colley insisted that Murphy did not die until all the hair had burned off his head. [At that moment the body is supposed to have turned over.] Later, Colley tied Murphy's overcoat to the mule's saddle and rode the animal off about six miles to the west. There he turned the mule loose. Colley's strategy was to create the impression that Watts Murphy had left the county.<sup>23</sup>

After making his confession, Colley took Augustus Murphy to the scene of the crime. There among the ashes of the log heap the remains of the victim were found. At the macabre scene searchers found a few of the victim's bones and teeth. His heart and liver were also found. To the extent that the remains constituted a body they were buried in Beat 11.<sup>24</sup>

Rumors of the Butler Springs trouble on Wednesday did not reach Greenville until late Saturday afternoon. The county sheriff, J.F. Borganier, left Saturday night for the scene of the alleged murder. According to his account the blacks had been arrested, lynched, and the posse dispersed by the time he arrived.<sup>25</sup> The sheriff was told by Dunk Sirmon that he, with the assistance of Henry Clarke, J.R. Sirmon, Jr., and Frank Mize had the blacks in custody. Sensing that neighboring whites were becoming enraged over the Murphy affair, Sirmon

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<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

and his men decided that the prisoners would be safer in the Greenville jail. They placed the prisoners in a wagon and rode guard beside them on horseback.<sup>26</sup>

The trip to the Greenville jail was about sixteen miles. Instead of taking the most direct route, Sirmon decided to take the Old Federal Road. The strategy failed. Sirmon and his party were about ten miles from Greenville near the old Buckaloo plantation when they were met by a group of armed men on horseback. Estimates varied, but the mob probably included between fifty and a hundred men. At approximately 3:00 Sunday morning Sirmons men were forced, at gunpoint, to surrender their prisoners. First, the two men were strung up to two branches of a nearby tree. Then the three women met the same fate at another tree a few yards away.<sup>27</sup> According to one newspaper, news of the mobs work quickly spread. Within a few hours hundreds of people were reported to have gathered near the lynching site to gaze at the five black bodies dangling with broken necks.<sup>28</sup>

Rumors soon spread that a number of prominent Butler county citizens had participated in the lynching bee. Sheriff Bargainier ignored the rumors and claimed that he failed to find any clue as to who composed the lynching party.<sup>29</sup>

Much will remain untold about the circumstances that led to the death of Watts Murphy. One news account noted that he had been involved in the shooting of a black man, Jerry Dixon, about a year previous to his own death. The suggestion was made that revenge might have been a possible motive.<sup>30</sup> Another account mentioned that young Murphy was separated from his wife and living with one of the black women lynched for his murder. Speculation over jealousy as a possible motive made muffled circulation. In a later edition, King Murphy, the dead mans brother, requested a retraction of the lines concerning his brothers domestic arrangements, claiming

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<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*; See also the accounts in the *Mobile Daily Register*, April 22, 1895, and the *Florida Times Union*, April 22, 1895.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Greenville Advocate*, April 24, 1895.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*



that "Watts was a happily married man."<sup>31</sup> The editor of *The Living Truth* did not feel that a retraction was in order, but he inserted a note stating that King Murphy said that the story about his brother living with a black woman was a lie.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of the lack of solid evidence related to Murphy's murder, few Alabamians doubted the identity of the charred remains found near Butler Springs. No coroner's report has been found, but Murphy's death was recorded in the county's Register of Deaths. His death, listed on April 17, 1895, noted him as a white male, twenty-nine years of age. The cause of death was given as murder.<sup>33</sup>

The next entry in the Registry of Deaths was dated April 21, 1895. Five entries on that date corresponded to the names of the five victims listed in the newspaper accounts. Mary Dean, the youngest of the group, was listed as a black female, twenty-one years of age. The Greene sisters were also listed as black females and were recorded as being twenty-two and twenty-three years old. John Rattler, the accused axe wielder was listed as a black male, twenty-six years old. Zeb Colley, the oldest of the captured field hands, was listed as a black male, twenty-nine. The cause of death for each of the five was given as lynched. Their burial site was recorded as Beat 16.<sup>34</sup>

Little is known about the earlier lives of the two men and three women who were lynched. Zeb Colley's family members were loyal servants of the Murphy family for many years. Practically nothing was revealed about the other four victims. Lacking personal information about the five lynching victims, a majority of the county's citizens might have believed that horrible fate was deserved. Yet, if such was the general feeling it was a silent expression. The lynching was deplored by responsible presses, not just in Butler county, but all over the state and the nation.

As the various accounts of the Watts Murphy death and

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<sup>31</sup>*Greenville Living Truth*, April 25, 1895.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, May 2, 1895.

<sup>33</sup>Register of Deaths, 1894-1898, Probate Office, Butler County Court House.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

the ensuing lynching bee were told and recorded, they were carried across the country. The great eastern dailies gave the story front page space. There was a correlation between the distance from the story and the tendency to embellish the details. Even greater was the margin of error regarding names, numbers, and places.<sup>35</sup>

The Greenville *Advocate* reported the details, but ended its initial article on a pessimistic note:

This horrible assination and lynching is a fearful blow to the reputation of our county, which was just recovering from the effects of the double lynching of Hipp and Kelly.<sup>36</sup>

The neighboring Troy *Democrat* in its April 26 edition gave a colorful description of the events leading up to the lynching. The paper, which distrusted normal channels of justice, ended on a sympathetic note:

Without comment as to the manner in which they were punished, whether justifiable or not, there can be no dispute — the negroes met just punishment. Now as to lynching, we are unqualifiedly opposed to it and can conceive no justifiable excuse for the lynching of the negroes. But we do believe we know why the lynching was resorted to. It was because of slowness and uncertainty of a trial by law. Until this is remedied we may expect lynching bees.<sup>37</sup>

It is doubtful that many of the local citizens would have initiated a verbal attack on the members of the lynch mob. To do so would have invited physical, social, and economic retribution on themselves and their families. Nevertheless, they approved local editors who soundly criticized the practice

<sup>35</sup>Washington *Post*, April 22, 1895, New York *Times*, April 22, 1895, New York *Herald*, April 22, 1895, Chicago *Tribune*, April 22, 1895, Atlanta *Constitution*, April 22, 1895, Florida *Times Union*, April 22, 1895, Mobile *Daily Register*, April 22, 1895, Montgomery *Advertiser*, April 22, 1895, Greenville *Advocate*, April 24, 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Greenville *Advocate*, April 24, 1895.

<sup>37</sup>Troy *Democrat*, April 26, 1895.

of lynching. While many critical letters to the editor could be found on almost any issue in the local papers, not a single letter has been found in 1895 criticizing the journals' anti-lynching editorials.

A few local citizens considered the lynchings a moral outrage. One writer from Georgiana wrote a letter to Colonel Whitehead at *The Living Truth*:

The recent awful tragedy in Butler County in which one white man and five negroes were murdered brings to mind twenty-three lynchings and murders in this county in the past 5 years. It is reported that the 5 negroes were horribly mutilated, their eyes cut out, ears cut off and their bodies burnt and cut into strings. I would thank you to advise me if this report is true, as I desire to inform the Chinese of our advance state of civilization, and point out to them the real benefits to be derived from an adoption of our American Christian system. I want to aid the foreign mission cause by showing how much our religion has done for Butler County and how much we love God.

Lover of Justice<sup>38</sup>

Whitehead responded in the same issue:

We can't agree with our Georgiana correspondent in holding the Christian religion responsible for the outrageous work of the lynchers of the Butler Springs beat. There will always be bad men in Christian communities over whom the churches have no influence, till 'millenian dawn' — and then this world will be a paradise. Even 'God's chosen people' lynched the best and purest creature that ever set foot on this sin-cursed globe.<sup>39</sup>

The *Mobile Daily Register* was quick to condemn the Butler county lynching. Its editor agreed that the circumstances of the case had excited the people to extremes of human en-

<sup>38</sup>Greenville *Living Truth*, May 2, 1895.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

duration, but he refused to justify the mob's action. He maintained that although six persons might have been implicated in the murder of Watts Murphy, all were not equally guilty. One or more might have been able to prove non-complicity and innocence had they been permitted an appearance in court. Finally the editor justified the legal system: "We make the laws, we elect the judges, we compose the juries, and if we cannot trust ourselves to administer justice, then indeed is our civilization a failure and the Caucasian is played out."<sup>40</sup>

The editorial writer for the *Montgomery Advertiser* criticized the lynchers. How many of those engaged in the hanging, he wondered, would have been able as individuals to kill one of the victims. He assured those participants that they were no less guilty for going together in a band and violating the law, than had they acted singly. Maintaining that people equate public safety with respect for the law, he urged "the severest condemnation and punishment for those who perpetrated the terrible crimes against the unconvicted prisoners."<sup>41</sup>

The *Advertiser* rebuked those who justified lynching by complaining of the slowness of a trial by law. Readers were reminded that the last legislature had expedited the trial process. A new circuit was organized, and on proper presentation of the facts a special term could have been held in Butler to try the accused murderers.<sup>42</sup>

If there were moral reasons for deploring lynchings, more practical economic reasons were also present. Newspapers outside the south reported the lynchings, but few editorialized on the evils of lynch law. Even so, enterprising southerners were afraid that threats of mob violence would intimidate outside investors. If prospective financiers saw the law casually disregarded in one instance, might not their valuable property at some time be threatened by mob rule? Few manufacturers cared to see investments destroyed without any hope of protection from local law officials.

Alabama officials had been negotiating with outside in-

<sup>40</sup>*Mobile Daily Register*, April 23, 1895.

<sup>41</sup>*Montgomery Advertiser*, April 15, 1895.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

vestors to develop some of the state's natural resources. Alabamians had to realize that mob violence would hurt everyone where they would be bound to feel it, namely their pocket-books. The press of the state picked up on the economic argument. The *Montgomery Advertiser's* editor lamented that one act of lawlessness committed only by a fraction of the population could be devastating. Outsiders would interpret the act as typical of the people in the state where the deed was done. Numerous examples of charity, hospitality, and submission to justice would be ignored. The *Advertiser* argued that the South had to overcome the prejudice of the nation's financial and industrial centers. Otherwise the investment of capital in industrial enterprises would be withheld. Directing himself specifically to Alabamians, the editor implored them to abhor lynch law. He reminded them that wherever punishment was swift and certain lynching would seldom be resorted to. Finally, he assured the world outside that in no state in the union were life and property more safe. Any act of even one of her citizens that gave a different impression would be strongly deplored.<sup>43</sup>

Governor William C. Oates was also concerned about the state's reputation for law and order. On April 23, 1895, he issued an official Proclamation offering a reward of \$250 for the unknown parties responsible for the lynchings of John Rattler, Zeb Colley, Martha and Alice Greene, and Mary Dean.<sup>44</sup>

Apparently some of the governor's advisors felt that Sheriff Barganier's handling of the case left much to be desired. The rumors must have gotten back to the sheriff because on April 22, he wrote a letter to the governor and requested that it be printed in the *Montgomery Advertiser*:

Hon. W.C. Oates, Governor:

The report as to the five prisoners that were lynched being taken away from myself and deputies is not true. They were hung before I could get there. There was no officer at all that ever had them in charge.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, April 26, 1895.

<sup>44</sup>Executive Orders, State of Alabama, 1895, Governor's Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.



Private citizens had them in charge was the only information I could get.

J. F. Barganier  
Sheriff<sup>45</sup>

Little came of Governor Oates' reward. No convictions were ever secured for the murders of the five black victims of the mob's violence. Except for a few articles on the dangers of lynching little follow-up was done on the original reports. After a few weeks life was back to normal in Butler County and the local population concerned themselves with the questions at hand: crops and politics.

Any account of the Butler County lynching would be incomplete without some idea of how black Alabamians reacted. Few black newspapers exist for the period. There is not one available for Butler County, but the black citizens of Barbour County were a vocal group, and they drew up a nine point petition responding to the lynching. They sent it to Colonel Whitehead, who published it in the May 16, edition of *The Living Truth*. The Barbour County blacks went on record as protesting the mob violence that led to the five deaths. They made it clear that they were law-abiding citizens who deprecated crime of any kind. The group believed that crime deserved punishment, and that every accusation deserved a fair trial before an impartial jury. They pointed out the inseparable ties between the two races in the South, and insisted that the interest of one should be the interest of each. They admitted that they were the weaker of the two races, but noted that they contributed to the state something like \$20,000. In return for their loyalty they wanted protection from the horrors of the cursed lynch law. Finally, they pledged themselves to aid in the apprehension and punishment of all violators of the law among their race. The proclamation ended with a word of thanks to Governor Oates for the steps he had taken to find and punish the lynch mob.<sup>46</sup>

The response of the petitioners, the governor's proclamation, and numerous anti-lynching editorials appeared to be for naught. Six more blacks and two whites were lynched in

<sup>45</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser*, April 23, 1895.

<sup>46</sup>Greenville *Living Truth*, May 16, 1895.

Alabama before 1895 ended.<sup>47</sup> The results for the next year were scarcely better: twelve blacks and four whites met their deaths at the hands of a mob.<sup>48</sup> The Alabama lynching statistics do not improve much until 1899 and 1900 when totals of six and four were recorded respectively.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>NAACP, 44.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

CONFEDERATE SALTPETRE MINING  
NORTHERN ALABAMA

by

Marion O. Smith

One problem that the Confederacy succeeded in solving was the production of sufficient amounts of gunpowder. A "complete" account of this achievement has never been written, and the published references that exist tend to be of a general nature or serve as supporting data for a broader topic. The study of this subject has been hampered by the wartime destruction of many of the documents and by the subsequent failure of the highest ranking personnel to write their memoirs. Although there are many facets to the story, the focus of this article will be upon the domestic production of saltpetre or nitre, the main ingredient of gunpowder, from the limestone caves of northern Alabama, with particular attention given to the difficulties of an individual operation.

At the start of the war virtually no powder was manufactured in the South. The 1860 census lists only two small mills, one in South Carolina and one in Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> After secession, many local government officials, as well as private citizens, realized that if war did come, a domestic supply of gunpowder must be developed. In some states, as in Tennessee, military boards were established whose duties included making contracts with local producers of saltpetre.

Working closely with the Tennessee Military and Financial Board was Samuel D. Morgan, an influential citizen of Nashville. In the spring of 1861 he corresponded with people not only in his own state but in Arkansas and Alabama, encouraging them to commence saltpetre production from caves. Later he aided in the enlargement of Cheatham County, Tennessee's Sycamore Powder Mills, where much of the saltpetre produced in the area was blended with charcoal and sulphur, and made

<sup>1</sup>*Manufactures of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1865), III, 556, 561.

into powder.<sup>2</sup>

The immediate result of Morgan's solicitations was to learn the location of both previously mined and potentially mineable saltpetre caves. In Tennessee he obtained information about a number of caves, including Nickajack, Lookout, Big Bone, and several unnamed caves in or near White County. For Alabama, six responses to Morgan are known. William Richardson Hunt, then chief of ordnance at Memphis, but later the Nitre and Mining Bureau officer at Selma in charge of iron mining,<sup>3</sup> forwarded saltpetre information from a Mr. Echols of Huntsville: "Wm or David Larkin in Jackson County Ala owns a deposit from which Mr. Echols says he has purchased it by the waggon load from time to time for many years." In addition, he reported a "deposit" on the lands of "Dr. H A Binford in Limestone Co" and "Dr. Wm. O. Winston of Talladega Co."<sup>4</sup> B. Lanier of Huntsville indicated that there was "a cave of Salt Peter at the mouth of Elk River in Lauderdale Cty" where "There has been a good deal of work done" but "The mine is not any Thing like Exasted."<sup>5</sup> Referring to a notice by Morgan in the local paper, John D. Taylor of Guntersville volunteered, "And as for the dirt containing the Niter I am assured by good men that there is an abundance of it in the different caves of this (Marshall) County and all we lack is Some One to start the work."<sup>6</sup> Sam Tate, Superintendent of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, reported a cave "2 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles below Tusculumbia" with "an inexhaustable Supply of Rich Salt Petre earth in it."<sup>7</sup> James R. Harris of Winchester, Tennessee, who had visited caves in Jackson County "Convenient of access — and within Ten miles of Stephenson," asked where he could obtain four 100 gallon kettles.<sup>8</sup> But Nelson Robinson,

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<sup>2</sup>George W. Rains, *History of the Confederate Powder Works* (Augusta, Georgia, 1882), 5; A. P. Van Gelder and H. Schlatter, *History of the Explosives Industry in America* (New York, 1927), 108.

<sup>3</sup>*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D. C., 1880-1901), Ser. 4, II, 778.

<sup>4</sup>William R. Hunt to Samuel D. Morgan, May 9, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

<sup>5</sup>B. Lanier to Samuel D. Morgan, May 1, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers.

<sup>6</sup>John D. Taylor to Samuel D. Morgan, May 11, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers.

<sup>7</sup>Sam Tate to Samuel D. Morgan, May 10, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers.

<sup>8</sup>James R. Harris to Samuel D. Morgan, June 28, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers.

a sixty-one year old farmer and lawyer of Bellefonte,<sup>9</sup> had the most positive news: "I have Succeeded in getting a company to go to work in the Sauta Cave, the best in the region with one hundred hands. They commenced on Monday last [May 6]." He further mentioned that he had men searching the mountains for other caves in addition to "starting a party to examine a large cave in DeCalb Co. near old fort Payne." The greatest difficulty, he thought, in mining the nitre deposits was "in obtaining hands to work them — Such is the false military furor here to enter the army."<sup>10</sup>

Newspapers of the same period show that interest in locating saltpetre deposits was a public concern. The *Tuscaloosa Constitution* observed "there are several Saltpetre caves in Franklin County, Ala., which have been worked on a small scale" and suggested that a "competent mineralogist" should test them.<sup>11</sup> The *Huntsville Democrat* mentioned that in Morgan County "there are very rich saltpetre caves in Newsom's Sinks, very accessible, about fifteen miles from Whitesburg . . . belonging to Mr. David Prince, who says, the Confederate States may work them at pleasure."<sup>12</sup> The *Fayetteville, Tennessee Observer* noted that Nashville had received "a large lot of sulphur" and that powder would be made there "as soon as the nitre (saltpetre) can be procured." Mentioning that nitre had been made in North Alabama caves during the War of 1812, it was pleaded, "The business should be at once commenced. We cannot fight without powder. We cannot make powder without saltpetre. Who will see to it that the caves once worked to produce this absolute necessity are again worked and saltpetre made for market?"<sup>13</sup>

Jackson County's Sauta Cave, one of the caves worked before and during the War of 1812, was briefly mentioned several times. In June, 1861, the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported

<sup>9</sup>1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, Town of Bellefonte, 84, and township 3, Range 6 East, 24.

<sup>10</sup>N. Robinson to Samuel D. Morgan, May 10, 1861, Samuel D. Morgan Papers. It is likely that Mr. Robinson was a kinsman of William Robinson, who operated Sauta during the War of 1812.

<sup>11</sup>As quoted in the *Rome, Georgia Tri-Weekly Courier*, May 11, 1861.

<sup>12</sup>As quoted in the *Nashville Daily Patriot*, June 8, 1861.

<sup>13</sup>*Fayetteville, Tennessee Observer*, June 13, 1861.



that the proprietors were daily "turning out a quantity," being under contract "to furnish a certain number of pounds monthly to a powder manufacturer in Nashville, Tennessee." It was claimed "some fifty hands" were employed at Sauta, with "the average yield" being "about three pounds of the salt to one bushel of earth, ten bushels of wood ashes being used in lixiviation."<sup>14</sup> About the same time the Huntsville *Advocate* reported that John D. Borin was one of the men in charge of the operation and that his company could "turn out 700 pounds per day."<sup>15</sup>

At the same time local expression of concern and early attempts toward actual saltpetre production were in process, the Confederate Government made similar efforts to insure that an adequate supply would be available. The Provisional Congress on February 20, 1861, passed "An Act to provide Munitions of War, and for other purposes," which included provision for "the establishment of powder mills and for the manufactory of powder."<sup>16</sup> In early May, in answer to a Congressional resolution asking if any measures had "been taken to promote and induce manufactures of arms and of powder," the Secretary of War reported that an agent, John C. Riddle, "has been dispatched to examine several caves on Little Bear Creek in Franklin County, and another in Blount County," Alabama.<sup>17</sup> In April Major Josiah Gorgas was assigned as the Confederacy's Chief of Ordnance and in that capacity one of his duties was to guarantee adequate powder supplies.<sup>18</sup> To this end he and President Jefferson Davis selected George Washington Rains, giving him full power to do what was needed.<sup>19</sup> Leaving Richmond July 10, 1861, Rains toured the South, selected Augusta, Georgia, as the site for the South's main powder mill, and proceeded to Nashville to make arrangements to increase powder production there. Saltpetre contracts with the Military and Financial Board were turned over

<sup>14</sup>As quoted in the Columbus, Georgia *Daily Inquirer*, July 1, 1861.

<sup>15</sup>As quoted in *ibid.*, June 22, 1861.

<sup>16</sup>Frank E. Vandiver, *Ploughshares Into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance* (Austin, Texas, 1952), 57. See James M. Matthews, ed., *Statutes at Large of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America* (Richmond, 1864), Stat. I, Chap. IV.

<sup>17</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 4, I, 292-93.

<sup>18</sup>Vandiver, *Ploughshares Into Swords*, 57.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 75; Rains, *Confederate Powder Works*, 4.

to him, he visited some caves, and sent agents with authority to make contracts to investigate others. After several months Rains was relieved of his duties in Tennessee and subsequently devoted his full energies to the construction and operation of the successful Augusta Powder Mill.<sup>20</sup> During the fall he published a pamphlet, "Notes on Making Saltpetre from the Earth of the Caves" which was widely distributed and copied in many newspapers, including those of Alabama.<sup>21</sup>

As the duties of the Ordnance Department increased, Gorgas asked the creation of a separate organization to supervise saltpetre production. On April 11, 1862, Congress accommodated and the Nitre Corps came into existence,<sup>22</sup> nominally under the supervision of the Ordnance Department, with Isaac M. St. John as chief. The saltpetre region was divided into districts with an officer in charge of each district who oversaw work details and production. The Corps worked so well that on April 22, 1863, Congress made it an independent entity of the War Department with the title Nitre and Mining Bureau, and to its responsibilities were added the mining of iron, copper, lead, coal, and other minerals.<sup>23</sup>

Alabama was divided into two districts. William Gabbett commanded the northern district, No. 9, and William H. C. Price the southern district, No. 10. Later, as the Confederates were forced from Tennessee, Gabbett also acted as head of the middle Tennessee and extreme northwestern Georgia district and signed his correspondence as superintendent of districts 8 and 9.<sup>24</sup> Gabbett's territory was in the mountains and most of the saltpetre his men made came from caves. In Price's district, however, saltpetre was usually extracted from dirt underneath old buildings, and a potential source was created

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 7.

<sup>21</sup>Two Alabama papers in which the pamphlet was copied were the *Huntsville Democrat*, December 4, 1861, and *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, March 26, 1862.

<sup>22</sup>James M. Matthews, ed., *Public Laws of the Confederate States of America Passed at the First Session of the First Congress*; 1862 (Richmond, 1862), 27-28.

<sup>23</sup>James M. Matthews, ed., *The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the Third Session of the First Congress*; 1863 (Richmond, 1863), 114.

<sup>24</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 4, III, 702. See John R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

by constructing artificial nitre beds.<sup>25</sup>

If the surviving records present an accurate picture, 1862 nitre production in Alabama seems not to have met the optimism of the previous year. It was reported in March that only four caves were then being worked. Without naming any of the caves it was claimed that fourteen men working four and a half months, made 2,785 pounds at one operation, and at other sites 9,000 and 4,350 pounds were made, at a cost per pound, of 75 and 73 cents. It was urged that the government price for saltpetre be increased "to secure a continuance of the work."<sup>26</sup> Undoubtedly one of the caves being worked was Sauta, but spring brought General Ormsby M. Mitchel's invasion of northern Alabama which "occasioned a general suspension of work" at that site.<sup>27</sup> By late July only "two or three caves" were being worked in Alabama, but "more will soon be started by Bureau agents."<sup>28</sup>

Before the end of the year, after the Federals temporarily withdrew from the area, work was resumed at Sauta. Concerned about protection at cave sites, St. John asked for and received authority to "organize and arm the working forces."<sup>29</sup> An order was issued which allowed "a company of sixty-four non-conscripts to be raised and detailed to guard the Santa [Sauta] Cave."<sup>30</sup> This order was soon revoked and substituted by a similar one for the company "to guard and work" the cave, which was in line with St. John's belief that it was better that "the workmen guard their own works."<sup>31</sup>

For Alabama there are indications that the number of saltpetre cave operations increased after 1862. This is deduced from the increase in recorded incidences of discovery of such

<sup>25</sup>Ralph W. Donnelly, "Scientists of the Confederate Nitre and Mining Bureau," *Civil War History*, II (December, 1956), 80. The war ended before the beds matured.

<sup>26</sup>Charleston *Courier*, March 6, 1862. The New York *Herald*, April 20, 1862, quoting the same source, says 6,000 pounds for the second site instead of 9,000.

<sup>27</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 4, II, 29.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*Special Orders of the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office Confederate States*, 1862 (Washington, D. C., 1885-1887), II, 566; *Official Records*, Ser. 4, II, 223.

operations by the advancing Union forces. Specific information for 1863, however, is sparse. In April General Grenville M. Dodge, USA, alluded to a saltpetre works "near Decatur."<sup>32</sup> It is possible that this was the cave near the confluence of the Elk River with the Tennessee, since in May the location of such a cave was published on a map in a Northern newspaper under the headlines, "Col. Dodge's Expedition."<sup>33</sup> Or perhaps it was Morgan County's Trinity Nitre Works, from which during this time tools and provisions were moved to a place of safety by the superintendent, John L. Bartow.<sup>34</sup> Sauta Cave was still in operation as late as June, but probably within a few weeks work there was suspended for the final time.<sup>35</sup> The Union re-occupation of much of Alabama north of the Tennessee River and the movement of portions of General William S. Rosecrans' army through the state and into Georgia in late summer brought to light two more caves. On September 4th a detachment of Colonel Edward M. McCook's cavalry, moving southward from Valley Head, found the works at what later became known as Manitou Cave and captured the Confederate nitre agent.<sup>36</sup> A private with that detachment noted they "passed a saltpeter Cave and Burned the works and the Saltpeter Mills."<sup>37</sup> The next day, while a large segment of the Union army was moving through Long Island Cove and up the western slope of Sand Mountain, a cave which contemporary reports called either "saltpetre" or "Hill's" was located "where the rebels have been working the cave ever since the war began." This cave drew many soldier visitors, including Rosecrans himself.<sup>38</sup>

More is known about Confederate nitre mining efforts in Alabama for 1864 than for any other period of the war. This is because official reports of Union raids were published, and of the recent acquisition of the papers of a Confederate Nitre

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. II, 215.

<sup>33</sup>New York *Herald*, May 11, 1863.

<sup>34</sup>Expense account, April, 1863, for John L. Bartow, RG109, Confederate Papers Related to Citizens or Business Firms. Microcopy 346, Roll 46, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

<sup>35</sup>William D. Chadick to William Gabbett, John R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Archives, Atlanta.

<sup>36</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 1, XXX, Pt. III, 354.

<sup>37</sup>John W. Rowell, *Yankee Cavalrymen* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1971), 141.

<sup>38</sup>*Louisville Daily Journal*, September 19, 1863; Charles H. Kirk, ed., *History of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry* (Philadelphia, 1906), 228.

and Mining Bureau officer.

Several sketchy 1864 reports mention saltpetre operations. In late January the 15th Michigan Mounted Infantry again destroyed "a quite extensive niter-works" at Manitou Cave "and captured 1 officer and 7 privates."<sup>39</sup> In mid-April Brigadier General John W. Geary with 800 men made a five day reconnaissance by boat down the Tennessee River from Bridgeport to near Triana and back. "At Wild Goat Cove," he reported, we "discovered places for manufacturing saltpeter."<sup>40</sup> A few days later a Nashville, Tennessee, paper listed the names of fifteen citizens and soldiers "direct from the nitre works near Paint Rock, (Ala.)" who had apparently quit the Confederacy. "Up to a short time since they had all been engaged in the nitre works."<sup>41</sup> That summer, on August 15, Major Alfred B. Wade, 73d Indiana Infantry, with a force of 100 men, crossed the Tennessee River and at the plantation of James Grantlin "destroyed a saltpeter-work belonging to the Confederate Government," and at Valhermosa Springs "effectively destroyed another salt-peter-work . . . breaking the kettles and burning the building." He noted there were "other works in the neighborhood, but I did not discover them."<sup>42</sup>

These reports deal with sites, generally on or near the Tennessee River, that were located by Union patrols. While interesting, little is actually learned about the individual operations. Who worked these sites, when they were started, how large and how productive they were are questions usually not answered. Some of the answers, for a few of the caves, are revealed in a collection of papers donated to the Georgia Archives in 1971, which gave the largest amount of detailed information about Confederate saltpetre mining in Alabama known to date.

John Riley Hopkins, a prominent citizen of Gwinnett County, Georgia, was an officer at several nitre works in Alabama. Within his papers are about 200 documents pertaining to that service, mostly dated 1864, including time sheets,

<sup>39</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 1, XXXII, Pt. I, 129.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, Pt. II, 663-68.

<sup>41</sup>*Nashville Daily Times and True Union*, April 21, 1864.

<sup>42</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. I, 463-64.



lists of arms, types of tools used, names of workmen and slaves, ration and forage lists, requisitions, receipts, monthly reports, and various messages between sites.<sup>43</sup> Although a few references are made to Sauta Cave in Jackson County and Blue Mountain Cave in Calhoun County, the bulk of the material pertains to the Long Hollow and Big Spring works in Marshall and four sites in Blount County: Nixon's, Culpepper's, Little Warrior, and Cedar Mountain.<sup>44</sup> A close examination of these records reveal many of the daily struggles of Hopkins and his fellow workers to produce saltpetre.

As an example, because sufficient records exist, and the correct identity of the site is unquestioned, the Confederate mining efforts at Marshall County's Long Hollow Cave will be presented at length. This cave, located in a bluff near the Tennessee River about ten miles below Guntersville, has been surveyed to a distance of 2,680 feet.<sup>45</sup> The mining was done in the first thousand feet of passage, a dry, straight natural tunnel five to ten feet wide and usually of walking height except for one crawl about one hundred, fifty feet long. Physical evidence within the cave indicates that the miners excavated a layer of earth from the floor two or three feet thick. Also, the lack of piles of leached dirt inside the cave suggests that the leaching was done outside.

It is not known when work began at Long Hollow. Possibly it was before late April, 1864, when Hopkins was sent to the site with a small force of men. On a report, next to the

<sup>43</sup>During his life Hopkins (1835-1909) was also "a school teacher, landowner, political aspirant, inventor, businessman, [and] lawyer." After the war he lived in Norcross, Georgia, where he pursued his diverse interests: operating "sawmills, cotton gins, and lathe shops," plus making an unsuccessful bid for the State legislature. Biographical sketch of John R. Hopkins, Manuscript Section, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

<sup>44</sup>With the exceptions of Sauta and Long Hollow, the exact identities of these caves remain unproved, although there exist within the specified counties more than enough caves which legend or physical evidence indicate were mined for saltpetre. Blue Mountain Cave is probably either Weaver, Little Weaver, or Lady Cave, all located near each other at present day Anniston. Big Spring may have been the later commercially shown Guntersville Caverns, and while there are candidates for Cedar Mountain and Little Warrior, Nixon's and Culpepper's are a complete mystery.

<sup>45</sup>Bill Torode and Chuck Hummel did the mapping March 18, 1970. Other names for the cave are Cave Mountain Cave, Alford Cave, and Barnard Cave. William W. Varnedoe, Jr., *Alabama Caves and Caverns* (Huntsville, 1973), unnumbered pages.

names of workers W. H. Herrin and A. C. McMinn, was the notation "Old hand at Long Hollow," indicating that they had been there a considerable time.<sup>46</sup> Hopkins initially commanded ten men plus a wagon and team. On May 1st three men left and twelve men arrived. At mid-month came nine hands, including J. M. Blackwell, who had been recommended for "foreman in the cave," followed a few days later by a lone laborer.<sup>47</sup> Five of these newcomers deserted May 24th. Exclusive of the two "old hands" already mentioned, the entire force at Long Hollow had been transferred from other nitre or associated works in northern Alabama. Three, including Hopkins and his assistant superintendent, W. B. Stephens, came from Big Springs; six from Blue Mountain; three from Prater's Cave; two from Little River; five from Cedar Mountain; and eight from Cobb's Potash Works. During May one sick man was discharged, while two other sick men were sent to Big Spring.<sup>48</sup>

The Nitre Bureau expected Hopkins to be productive. This was indicated in a letter from his immediate supervisor, J. F. Martin: "We look to you for Saltpeter and dont intend that you shall Lack for anything that we can furnish."<sup>49</sup> Martin, at Big Spring, was assistant superintendent of District No. 9.

Besides orders, tools and supplies for Long Hollow came from Big Spring. Hopkins was instructed to give receipts for the tools he acquired from that work. While at Long Hollow Hopkins receipted axes, picks, shovels, rock hammers, ovens and lids, tin plates, nails, buckets, drills, iron wedges, steelyards, wheelbarrows, an adz, a crosscut saw, a handsaw, a froe, an one inch auger, a spirit level, a kettle, a hatchet, a spade, a crowbar, and barrels of potash.<sup>50</sup>

Rations were sent from Big Spring by wagon once a week. The daily amount issued per man at Long Hollow was a half pound of bacon and one and a half pounds of meal, plus an

<sup>46</sup>Time Sheet of Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works, May, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers. A. C. McMinn's name with the date 1864 was found on the cave wall by the writer in 1980.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*; J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 14, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>48</sup>Time Sheet of Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>49</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 14, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>50</sup>Various receipts and letters, John R. Hopkins Papers.

occasional small amount of peas. Salt was not weighed daily. For instance on May 3d, only five and three-fourths pounds were issued to nineteen men to last eight days. There appear to have been two classifications of men at Long Hollow, since the rations from Big Spring were marked "L" for laborers and "G" for guards. With the rations for the men was sent forage, usually corn, for the animals, a yoke of oxen and two mules.<sup>51</sup> Sometimes when forage failed to last it was borrowed or bought locally by Long Hollow personnel. Then when the regular shipment of rations and forage arrived, the borrowed amount was paid back.

Scarcity in all areas was a continuing problem for the nitre workers. Martin made repeated requests that meal sacks and other items should be returned to Big Spring. On one occasion he requested Hopkins to "please dispense with the use of the ox team — so far as you can . . . Our forage is getting verry scarce — and if your mule team can Carry on your works it will help us verry much in the way of feed." In the same note he requested nails to be sent back, "until our wagons returns from Blue Mountain we havent nails to Box what nitre we have made."<sup>52</sup> On another occasion he sent "all the paper that I can Spare" and promised to fill Hopkins' "requisition by the wagons — as far as in my power — but I think Some of the articles called for are not on hand."<sup>53</sup> Wood for construction at Long Hollow was cut and hauled to a local sawmill, then hauled back to the work site.<sup>54</sup> Late in May Martin asked Hopkins to "secure for me a Load of plank Suitable for nitre Boxes" because "we cant get any plank in this country."<sup>55</sup>

Early in the month Martin responded to a venture previously proposed by Hopkins. One of the Long Hollow workers, W. H. Herrin, apparently some time before had been engaged in nitre making in a cave north of the river and had left some of the finished product there when the work was abandoned. Hopkins was told to "Use your discretion in regard to Leting

<sup>51</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 8, 23, 1864; Rations issued at Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works; and Forage consumed at Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>52</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 23, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>53</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 6, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>54</sup>Lumber for Long Hollow, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>55</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 28, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

Mr. Herrin cross the River. If you think it perfectly Safe for him to go — & he will bring out the nitre that he has on hand I have no objection to his going.”<sup>56</sup>

Hopkins maintained a “Programme of labor & improvements” at Long Hollow which shows what work was actually done each day. From April 27 through May 7 at least four shelters for the workers, one cook shelter, one office shelter, and a furnace were built, plus grading and “Getting hopper floors.”<sup>57</sup> By the 14th four hoppers and various troughs were built and in place, and the workers “Filled 1st hopper 2/5 full of dirt.” On the next Monday, the 16th, the hopper was filled, the waterworks built, the settling trough fixed, and the crystalizing trough set up. Boiling commenced the next day and shelters were built for the new arrivals. On the 18th they “made 1st shoot of Nitre.” Routine work continued with the work details for the 21st being “8 men for dirt=hoppers — 1 boiling — 4 hauling — 2 wood — fixed office walls . . . filled 3rd hopper & began to fill 4th a little.” The 23d saw the usual “dirt work — boiling” continue, plus construction of the 5th hopper. They also “finished making first box of nitre.” The following day the 6th hopper was built, the “crystalization tray for draining nitre” was gotten ready, and the first box of nitre was sent off. Normal work was maintained and by the 28th the eighth hopper was under construction.<sup>58</sup>

On the back of a note from Assistant Superintendent Martin were the following computations. “A bank of dirt” in “55 yds of the low passage” of Long Hollow Cave was estimated to contain 2,652 bushels of dirt which was “enough to fill 10½

<sup>56</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 6, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers. It is possible that Herrin (born c. 1830), a Georgia-born farmer living near New Hope, Alabama, had been earlier involved in procuring saltpetre from a cave north of the river in Marshall County. Herrin's signature has been found by modern day explorer Bill Torode on the wall of Ledbetter Saltpetre Cave. 1860 Census, Alabama, Marshall, New Hope P. O., Tract S 6, Range 2 East, 13; Personal communication from Bill Torode, 1973.

<sup>57</sup>The writer does not know what the term “Getting hopper floors” here means, but possibly it involved the placement of the wooden slats in the sides of the hoppers to form a V-shaped “floor.” It is not known what type of leaching vats or hoppers were used at Long Hollow, but at Nickajack Cave, Marion County, Tennessee, V-vats were used.

<sup>58</sup>Programme of labor & improvements, Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works, John R. Hopkins Papers

hoppers of 252 Bu each.”<sup>59</sup> But this dirt bank was not to be touched, the Federals raided the works before it could be dug.

Because of their proximity to the river there was constant fear of discovery. Each time a boat passed the miners were in a state of alarm. They received arms May 21st and drilled for the first time the same day. For their entire force they had only nineteen guns: six old rifles, caliber 58, eleven old muskets, caliber 69, and two new Belgium rifles, caliber 69. Ammunition included 429 cartridges and 413 caps for the older guns, and, after the 23d, 140 cartridges and “13 papers of caps” for the Belgium rifles.<sup>60</sup>

On May 28, just when Long Hollow was beginning to become productive Martin at Big Springs wrote Hopkins:

You will hide your Kettles Tools & c Such as picks Shovels & Spades & c. — Bring your cooking vessels axes — and all other articles that you can bring — in your ox wagon — and fall back on this place as Rapidly as possible — have the men to help the wagon up the mountain. I will send the mule team to meet you on the way — have your men bring all their guns — *act promptly*<sup>61</sup>

The next day, after preaching services were held, the order was apparently carried out, just in time for the men to escape capture.

Long Hollow probably had been for some time under Federal surveillance. On the 29th Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Jackson of the 18th Wisconsin Infantry, commanding the Northern forces in the vicinity of Whitesburg, wrote his superior that there were “about fifty [rebels] at a saltpeter cave about one mile from here on the south side of the river,” and asked, “Shall I take some men and go there?”<sup>62</sup> The answer was yes and two days later he reported the result: “I

<sup>59</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 14, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>60</sup>Hopkins to W. H. Hall, May 23, 1864; “Remarks” column, Rations Issued at Long Hollow C. S. Nitre Works, May, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>61</sup>J. F. Martin to Hopkins, May 28, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>62</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. 1, XXXVIII, Pt. IV, 348.



found about thirty men at the saltpeter works. They all fled to the mountains. We destroyed all their works, which were near, and fire in their furnaces."<sup>63</sup>

Nitre making activities for Hopkins and his men were not over. On June 6 they were ordered to Blue Mountain to work in the cave there. About seven weeks later Hopkins and twenty men, including J. M. Blackwell and W. H. Herrin, were sent to Blount County's Cedar Mountain Nitre Works. Records from that operation reveal Hopkins was acting as assistant superintendent as late as October, 1864.<sup>64</sup>

During the last year of the war the headquarters of Nitre and Mining Districts 8 and 9 fluctuated between Blue Mountain and Montevallo. But Blue Mountain, the terminus for the Alabama and Tennessee Rivers Railroad,<sup>65</sup> was the more important. It was apparently the main supply center for the Nitre Bureau in north Alabama. Supplies from Blue Mountain were hauled by wagon to certain caves in the counties which served as local supply points, such as Big Spring in Marshall County and Little Warrior in Blount County. At the same time it can be assumed that much of the saltpetre that was made was sent back through Blue Mountain to the powder mill at Selma.<sup>66</sup>

Although the territory under Confederate control kept decreasing, Captain Gabbett's district continued to produce saltpetre until at least the last months of the war. Some of the same men, such as John D. Borin, who had been active at Sauta Cave in 1861, continued in the nitre business throughout the war. Saltpetre production, though frequently interrupted by the enemy, never ceased entirely. On more than one occasion, after a site was raided, it was refurbished and worked again. But the primary reason for continuance of production, even after a site was permanently destroyed or abandoned, was there

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<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>64</sup>W. H. Hall to Hopkins, June 6, 1864; List of men sent to Cedar Mountain Nitre Works, July 28, 1864; L. A. Mayo to T. J. Robinson, September 7, 1864; John J. Black to T. J. Robinson, October 22, 1864, John R. Hopkins Papers.

<sup>65</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. I, XXXII, Pt. II, 214.

<sup>66</sup>This mill had a capacity at the end of 1864 to make 500 pounds of powder a day. *Ibid.*, Ser. 4, III, 987.

were always other caves to be worked or operations in progress that could be enlarged. Near the end of the war Colonel St. John stated, "It has . . . been the aim of the Bureau to work to the last our natural deposits, at times within the enemy's lines, and to examine carefully for new deposits in every possible locality," an effort that was maintained in Alabama.<sup>67</sup>

Available figures for saltpetre production in northern Alabama, from both caves and underneath buildings, was as of September 30, 1864, 225,665 pounds. This represented 13% of the Confederacy's total domestic production, which, while lower than the Virginias (29.1%), Tennessee (15.9%), and Texas and Arkansas (23.5%), was nevertheless a significant accomplishment considering the few men involved. The force on September 30, 1864, for instance, was only 295 whites and 88 slaves or free blacks.<sup>68</sup>

At least fifty-five<sup>69</sup> caves in Alabama have been mined for saltpetre, and while it would be a mistake to assume they were all worked during the Civil War, certainly a large number were. Many were small one and two man operations, but as demonstrated in the above pages, some were sizeable government undertakings. The cessation of hostilities in 1865 and the invention of newer types of powder ended the use of saltpetre from American caves as an ingredient of gunpowder. Now all that remains from that obsolete mining process are a few piles of dirt, scattered wood fragments, pick marks, and a myriad of questions by speleohistorians.

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<sup>67</sup>Isaac M. St. John to James A. Seddon, October 1, 1864, *Ibid.*, 696.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 698.

<sup>69</sup>Varnedoe, *Alabama Caves and Caverns*, unnumbered pages; Alabama Geological Reports; personal communications and observation.

## GROVER CLEVELAND HALL: THE ANATOMIZATION OF A SOUTHERN JOURNALIST'S PHILOSOPHY

by

Daniel W. Hollis III

When we think of personal journalism in the post-Civil War South, names like Henry Grady, Josephus Daniels, and Virginus Dabney come to mind. Today, in the second half of the twentieth century, the paradigm of the personal journalist has all but disappeared, particularly in print journalism. The corporation has displaced the individual in most respects and so diluted the editor's role that personal freedom to write one's convictions is usually compromised. Grover Cleveland Hall (1888-1941) would not be at ease in the second half of the twentieth century, certainly not as an editor, for he epitomized the dauntless autonomy of a writing editor and indeed was one of the last of his kind. From his obscure origins in Henry County, Alabama, he became the Pulitzer Prize winning editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser* (1926-1941), and joined the accomplished Southern journalists of the twenties and thirties who enjoined and cajoled Southern consciousness.<sup>1</sup> How did Grover Hall's newspaper concepts evolve and how did his Southern perspective affect his viewpoint? Certain individual characteristics such as honesty, courage, intelligence, and the work ethic provide a rudimentary answer. Yet, it was through Hall's heritage and his formative newspaper experiences that his attitudes toward newspapers, his fellow man, politics, and the South were largely initiated. This essay will analyze the influences upon his life that explain the personal nature of a journalistic philosophy which reflected a Southern cultural phenomenon — the "attack on the grotesqueries of the benighted South."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For background on Hall and his family, see Daniel W. Hollis, III, "The Hall Family and Twentieth Century Journalism in Alabama," *The Alabama Review* 32 (April 1979): 119-140. For Hall's place alongside other contemporary Southern journalists, see especially Fred C. Hobson, Jr., *Serpent in Eden: H. L. Mencken and the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), and J. D. Allen, "Journalism in the South," in W. T. Couch, ed., *Culture in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 126-158.

<sup>2</sup>George B. Tindall, "The Benighted South: Origins of the Modern Image," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 40 (1964): 289.

Grover Hall was always fascinated by his family background, partly from curiosity, and also because he was a convinced adherent of genetic engineering. He was not alone in his scrutiny of heritage as his brothers, especially William Theodore Hall and Samuel Thomas Hall, also probed family origins and traits. It was then with some pride that Grover Hall liked to hearken back to his ancestry — to the first American Hall who left Ireland because he opposed a tax, and to other progenitors who had been newspapermen and physicians as well as farmers. Hall and his brothers often cited evidence that a particular trait of their forebears such as obstinacy or frivolity was reflected in them. Grover Hall was always proud of the Southern traditions of the family: his father had served in the Confederate army and his ancestors had lived all their years in either Georgia or Alabama. Hall was never very close to his parents since he was the last child born when they were middleaged. Yet, he felt a genuine warmth of parental affection. He was more intimate with his older brothers and maintained a camaraderie with them throughout his life.<sup>3</sup>

Growing up in Haleburg, Alabama on the family estate, he promptly learned the meaning of hard work, and he maintained an unflinching commitment to his tasks whether ploughing a field or writing a column. As for his school days, Hall found much to reflect upon in his mature years. He recalled the paucity of books in the school at Haleburg — the most unhappy detriment to his education — and once said that he had never seen a copy of Shakespeare's works until he moved to nearby Dothan. On the other hand, Hall affirmed that his instruction at Haleburg was above average in quality and that one teacher in particular, Will Glover, encouraged him to develop his writing skills. He edited the school paper, the "Haleburg Howler," and later dispatched a local news column from Haleburg to the

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<sup>3</sup>Samuel T. Hall, "Genealogical Record of the Hall Family" (1925), in possession of Miss Estelle Hall of Dothan, Alabama; Grover C. Hall, "This Side of the Truth: Pilgrimage of an ex-Plowboy" (unpublished manuscript — hereafter cited as Hall, Autobiography — in the papers of Grover C. Hall, Jr., possessed by Lee Martin [Mrs. Nimrod T.] Frazer of Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as GCH, Jr. Papers-Frazer), 1-2. See also the relevant correspondence and contract with Alfred Knopf for the publication of Hall's autobiography in the Grover C. Hall, Sr. Papers, State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as GCH, Sr. Papers.

Dothan *Eagle*.<sup>4</sup> Hall learned to philosophize early in his youth. He and his school mates "debated such challenging questions as 'Resolved that Washington was a greater man than Columbus,' and 'Resolved that nature is more wonderful than man'."<sup>5</sup> On the whole, however, the cultural benefits of Haleburg were meager. Hall lamented the fact that he had never heard a cultivated singer or a dignified musical composition, and had not see a good painting nor any sculpture prior to leaving Haleburg.<sup>6</sup> Although Hall's educational circumscriptions were notable, the Hall home strengthened and supported the learning process, especially through parental emphasis upon reading. Years later, conscious of his own background, Hall characterized Southern education as "running true to the conventional American form — that is to say, we are wasting inevitably a great deal of money, time and energy on a large number of hopelessly deficient youngsters in order to make sure that we shall provide opportunity to those who can profit by it."<sup>7</sup>

Although Haleburg was deep in the Bible Belt, Grover Hall was no religious zealot even while knowledgeable of the Bible. Of his early religious views, he wrote, "We were Baptists and fundamentalists, after a fashion. My first concept of God was of an old man lying on his belly, with his long whiskers sticking out of an opening in the slate-like sky, looking down upon us mortals and checking our sins, of which, I regret to report, there were many."<sup>8</sup> Hall's son once said that his father was an agnostic, but it is more accurate to say that his belief in God was shaped individually rather than through the institutional church.<sup>9</sup> Grover Hall's disdain for the church stemmed from his resentment of fatuous preachers. He believed the ministry to be a profession which condoned and nurtured mediocrity among the lower Southern classes. Further, South-

<sup>4</sup>Hall, Autobiography, 16; Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 22 February 1932, Harry P. Hall Papers, in possession of Mr. Harry P. Hall of Dothan, Alabama, hereafter cited as HPH Papers.

<sup>5</sup>Hall, Autobiography, 12.

<sup>6</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 22 February 1932, HPH Papers.

<sup>7</sup>"We Southerners," *Scribner's Magazine* 83 (January 1928): 83.

<sup>8</sup>Hall, Autobiography, 6.

<sup>9</sup>Grover C. Hall, Jr. to James Saxon Childers, 6 March 1957, Grover C. Hall, Jr. Papers, State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as GCH, Jr. Papers-Archives.



ern clergymen had an inordinate influence over the lower stratum because they were often the only intellectual contact for such people.<sup>10</sup> Hall thus had a fixation on Southern evangelists and was a storehouse of tales about them. Once when the notorious Rev. Bob Jones was offered a stogie by Hall, Jones replied, "No, Grover, I won't take a cigar. I've quit smoking cigars. I can smoke them in Alabama, but when I go into Pennsylvania and Ohio I find that the folks that follow me don't like a cigar-smoking preacher."<sup>11</sup> Grover Hall did maintain some of his warmest friendships with certain clergymen whom he regarded as cultured.

Grover Hall's parents fully expected their sons to leave home when the occasion arrived. Perhaps, therefore, the most notable moment of Hall's youth was when he departed the homestead at Haleburg for the "big city" of Dothan in 1905. There his brother, publisher William Theodore Hall, made a place for him as a printer's devil on the Dothan *Eagle*. W. T. Hall would not allow young Grover to write for the *Eagle* because he felt Grover was too liberal. Nevertheless, Grover Hall always expressed gratitude to W. T. Hall who "gave me the chance that made me what I am today."<sup>12</sup> Hall remained proud of the journalistic tradition upheld by his relations. He diligently followed the development of the Dothan *Eagle* under the tutelage of W. T. Hall's sons, Julian and Horace, and he offered encouragement to another newspaper brother, Edmond Cody Hall, and his sons in a similar manner. Also, Cody Hall may have been Grover's closest confidant and counsel. Grover Hall fully appreciated the extension of the Hall family spirit as reflected in the forceful pens of relatives.<sup>13</sup>

A further example of family influence upon Hall can be seen in his relationship to his son, Grover, Jr. The elder Hall was a stern father who desired to create a respect for academic pursuits in his son. He stopped using the lash on Grover, Jr.

<sup>10</sup>Grover C. Hall to Julia Collier Harris, 2 August 1927, Julian L. Harris Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, hereafter cited as Harris Papers.

<sup>11</sup>Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 4 May 1936, Henry L. Mencken Papers, New York Public Library, New York, New York, hereafter cited as Mencken Papers.

<sup>12</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 4 August 1937, HPH Papers.

<sup>13</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 16 July 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers. Cf. Hollis, "The Hall Family and Twentieth Century Journalism in Alabama."

early partly because it had been used so freely on him by his father. Instead, he said, "on more than one occasion, when his mother phoned me about Grover's impertinence, I surprised him by calling a taxi, going home between editorials and dressing him down."<sup>14</sup> Grover, Jr. was "never vicious" yet "mule-headed" and "something of a rough-neck," according to his father. Young Grover was always mindful to report his faults, his father related, and "if he should dynamite a train bridge tomorrow I doubt if he would leave town before telling me all about it."<sup>15</sup> Hall believed that culture should first be instilled in the home, and thus he had considerable influence over his son's education which he considered liberal compared with his own. His father said when Grover, Jr. was twenty that he was still unsure of his future occupation — "That merely means that he is a natural newspaperman."<sup>16</sup> Grover, Jr. later recalled that his father's most constant counsel was "Son, don't worry about your opportunity arising, it will — just be ready for it when it comes."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the influence of heritage and family, which in any event can hardly be accurately measured for anyone's life, Grover Hall's vision of newspapers as a profession was significant in molding his philosophy. He thought of the newspaper as a tool and sometimes a weapon that could shape and change the structure of society and government the way no other institution or individual could or would. Public opinion was not a formless void to Hall, but rather something that must be framed by the educated minds and spoon fed, if necessary, to the masses. The political elites, such as lawyers, had their own vested interests to cultivate and were thus undependable. As Hall put it, lawyers "know everything except the truth about the spirit of the law and the nobler traditions of his people."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, to the journalist fell the major obligation of discerning the "Truth" and then applying rigorous standards of enforcement. The newspapers of the twentieth century had a duty to challenge and critically examine accepted tradition in

<sup>14</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 16 July 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 9 September 1935, Mencken Papers.

<sup>17</sup>Grover C. Hall, Jr. to James Saxon Childers, 6 March 1957, GCH, Jr. Papers-Archives. Grover C. Hall, Jr. was editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser* from 1947 to 1966.

<sup>18</sup>Hall, *Autobiography*, 18.

order to better define the parameters of truth for public consumption. It was not merely a process of education, although that was implicit, but included assiduously nurtured wisdom through which knowledge could be properly administered.<sup>19</sup>

Grover Hall's newspaper philosophy was perhaps best reflected in his relationships with various owners and publishers during his career. In his youthful demand for freedom of expression seldom expected or conceived by most novice editors, he often sacrificed job security. Hall had an early proclivity for writing which was undoubtedly a prerequisite to his goal of editorship. The onset of his writing career as co-owner and editor of the Dothan *Daily Siftings* in 1908 satiated his ebullient determination to write. It was not, however, an auspicious beginning for only a few months after his start, his partner persuaded him to resign after Hall published a controversial letter defending a bawdy stage show which enraged the Dothan moralists. In his next position with the Jackson, Miss., *Daily News*, Hall lasted only one week on the job because editor Frederick Sullens would not allow him to write original pieces. His next publisher in Bessemer, Alabama fired him after a short tenure because Hall refused to stop smoking cigars on the job. After leaving Bessemer to be managing editor for the Selma, Ala., *Times*, Hall had apparently learned a modicum of discretion. Although he did not remain in either the Selma post or the subsequent editorial writer's job with the Pensacola, Fla., *Journal*, in both instances he left of his own volition for a professional advancement.<sup>20</sup>

When he arrived at the *Montgomery Advertiser* in 1910 as associate editor, he was no doubt in awe of the long-time publisher, William W. Screws. Hall had always admired the *Advertiser*, and he was content to spend his early years there as an apprentice/journeyman before emerging as his own master. He honed his writing ability and came to appreciate the old adage that practice makes perfect. By the time he assumed the title of editor in 1926, Grover Hall's philosophy of journalism was fully developed. He had a keen respect for style and his condescending attitude toward amateurs was derived

<sup>19</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 22 February 1932, HPH Papers; Grover C. Hall to Richard F. Hudson, July 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>20</sup>Hall, *Autobiography*, 20-23, 26-27, 32-33.

from his devotion to excellence. "Every literate person has one or two editorials in him," Hall wrote, "but few are fitted for routine, year-round writing. A writer in regular practice is in form, on edge, like an athlete. The amateur is not on edge."<sup>21</sup> Hall noted that even after taking a short vacation from writing, he found it difficult to regain his sharpness. Nonetheless, Hall did not believe that the ability to write was the sole or even the paramount requirement of an editor. "Most important of all," he said, "is the ability and willingness to think. One must think enough to acquire a viewpoint, a philosophy."<sup>22</sup> The neophyte, he argued from experience, has plenty of zeal and energy but lacks wisdom and judgment.

When Grover Hall became editor of the *Advertiser*, the publisher was Victor Hanson who also owned the Birmingham *News* and the Birmingham *Age-Herald*. Hanson and Hall understood their respective roles as well as any publisher-editor team. Hanson assured Hall that "In the matter of authority, I want you to be editor in fact, as well as in name, and I am sure that you will never abuse the authority in any way."<sup>23</sup> Within a year, Hanson somewhat belatedly backed Hall's proposal to assail Klan violence, even though it was risky business for advertising and circulation. Of course, it paid off for Hall when he won the 1928 Pulitzer Prize for his 1927 editorial series on the Klan.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 22 February 1932, HPH Papers.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>Victor Hanson to Grover C. Hall, 30 June 1926, GCH, Sr. Papers. On Hanson, see Marie Bankhead Owen, *The Story of Alabama: A History of the State* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1949), III, 152-53.

<sup>24</sup>Victor Hanson to Grover C. Hall, 19 July 1927, GCH, Sr. Papers; Grover C. Hall to Julian L. Harris, 3 December 1927, Harris Papers; Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 25 June 1931, Mencken Papers; Montgomery *Advertiser*, 8 May 1928; John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 77, 366. For a concise account of Hall's 1927 campaign and excerpts from key editorials, see chapter two of Charles W. Scarritt, "Grover Hall and 'Grandma' vs. the Ku Klux Klan" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Missouri, 1950). Scarritt's book, *The Klanbuster*, based on his thesis will be published by the University of Alabama Press. As for the Klan's reaction to Hall's Pulitzer, he wrote, "The Klan is sore as a boil and refuses to applaud me when I speak. The other day I was a guest at the Rotary Club. When I was introduced the boys came to their feet in their pleasant way — all but one. The chief officer of the local Klan, whom I helped beat for mayor a year ago, gripped his piles tighter and clung to his chair. It was quite amusing to watch the goat." (Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 12 May 1928, Mencken Papers).

Hall's relationship with Hanson's successor, Frank P. Glass, was similar. Hall described Glass as "forceful, brilliant," albeit "a bit erratic."<sup>25</sup> Glass with his Scottish heritage and Princeton education possessed a dedication for the truth which was wholly compatible with Hall's views so that his editorial freedom was assured into the early 1930's. Hall indicated that he got his way with Glass on all major issues largely because of Glass's affection for Hall and his "romantic sportsmanship."<sup>26</sup> In 1934, when Glass gave Hall a mandate to find a candidate to defeat Bibb Graves, Hall convinced Frank Dixon to seek the governorship which he eventually won four years later. When Richard F. Hudson bought ownership of the *Advertiser* in 1935, Hall was again fortunate that Hudson's newspaper vision was not unlike his predecessors. Hall was in fact personally closer to Hudson than to either Hanson or Glass and often likened their relationship to a partnership.<sup>27</sup>

In his communication with other publishers who were not his employers, Grover Hall further elucidated his views of what constituted a newspaper. In 1936, Hall declined an offer by Clark Howell, Jr. to become editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*.<sup>28</sup> Three years later, James M. Cox tendered Hall the editorship of the *Atlanta Journal* which he also rejected.<sup>29</sup> On both counts, Hall feared the loss of editorial freedom at the *Advertiser* which he fancied to be greater than any Southern editor.<sup>30</sup> Grover Hall had acquired an attachment not only for his colleagues on the *Advertiser*, but also for the town of Montgomery and Alabama. Although many disagreed with Hall's editorials, he was assured that he never alienated his readers. A great paper, he argued, was one that was intelligent, humanitarian, tolerant, inspirational and fair. Hall freely advised Cox that the *Atlanta Journal*, as well as any paper worth its

<sup>25</sup>Grover C. Hall to Julian L. Harris, 3 December 1927, Harris Papers. On Glass, see Owen, *The Story of Alabama*, III, 147-48, and Edwin Emery, *History of the American Newspaper Publishers Association* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), 135, 248.

<sup>26</sup>Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 26 May 1935, Mencken Papers.

<sup>27</sup>Grover C. Hall to Richard F. Hudson, July 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers. On Hudson, see Owen, *The Story of Alabama*, III, 154.

<sup>28</sup>Grover C. Hall to Clark Howell, Jr., 29 November 1936, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>29</sup>Grover C. Hall to James M. Cox, 17 January 1940, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>30</sup>Grover C. Hall to Clark Howell, Jr., 29 November 1936, GCH, Sr. Papers; Grover C. Hall to James E. Chappell, 31 December 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers.



salt, should "fight poverty and ignorance, it can fight for the dignity of man and slay every stuffed shirt that threatens our democracy."<sup>31</sup> A good editor, he believed, must be in close contact with his managing editor, city editor, and reporters. Grover Hall was audacious in his conviction that "the editorial compass of any daily newspaper should be fixed by the editor, or go entirely without flavor."<sup>32</sup> Hall pleaded guilty to narrow-mindedness when it came to the things which were most important to a newspaper, and he confessed to being a poor administrator of the news room.<sup>33</sup>

Grover Hall's editorial style had also been virtually fully delineated before he became editor in 1926. In general, and above all, he was fearless toward the truth because he sought every fact, dissected every innuendo, explored every motive, and then deliberated the disposition of each phrase. He was a progressive toward the extension of culture for he felt that the broader a man's vision, the more tolerant he was apt to be. Culture refines, but it also sharpens the sensibilities. Grover Hall's experiential awareness of the cultural gap between the South and the nation intensified his advocacy of Southern enlightenment. Hall finally sought through his editorials to uphold the dignity of man and to seek a greater humanitarianism in individual relations. These aims did not require a revolution, but rather the powers of society and government must merely be coaxed to stake out goals for the improvement in the requisite areas.

Certain professional confreres provided an ancillary influence on Hall's technique. The most constant impression emanated from the peerless H. L. Mencken. There was a definite Menckenesque flavor to Hall's way with words. Hall sought and received Mencken's advice and his patronage. On the other hand, Hall's personal philosophy was coincidental to rather than an imitation of Mencken's. Hall was also close in friendship and philosophy with Julian L. Harris, the Pulitzer Prize winning editor of the Columbus, Ga., *Enquirer-Sun*. Hall and Harris faced similar challenges and obstacles in their respective cities so that their comradeship was both natural and

<sup>31</sup>Grover C. Hall to James M. Cox, 1 January 1940, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>32</sup>Grover C. Hall to Clark Howell, Jr., 29 November 1936, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*; Grover C. Hall to James M. Cox, 1 January 1940, GCH, Sr. Papers.

predictable. Further advice and consultation came from editor Hamilton Owens of the revered Baltimore *Evening Sun*. Hall also regularly read a wide assortment of Southern papers such that the impersonal contact with other skilled editors unquestionably affected his image of Southern deficiencies and buoyed his own confidence.<sup>34</sup>

Grover Hall's editorial assaults according to one observer were impelled by "sentences, crowded, hurrying, almost leaping over one another, . . . crashing in like breakers with a Gulf hurricane behind them."<sup>35</sup> In spite of his flamboyance with the language, Hall's rhetoric was based on common sense which he had acquired through observation and experience as much as from instruction. Horace Hall probably put it best when he said that his Uncle Grover's "logic and human understanding undoubtedly sprouted from the Henry county clay he never managed to get from between his toes."<sup>36</sup> Grover Hall's candor was assuredly reinforced by courage as his battle with the Ku Klux Klan demonstrated. Hall knew full-well the personal risks involved in attacking the Klan or obscurantism and gladly accepted them. Moreover, Hall's personal courage which lent itself to the reputation of the *Advertiser* cogently illustrated that in Hall's era the editor was almost literally the designer and embodiment of his paper.

Hall's Southern perspective had a direct bearing on his editorial mettle. He obviously loved the South, yet recognized its flaws. Southerners were charming, but also subject to unreasonable prejudices. "The lower order of Southerner," he claimed, "is one of the most bestial human beings ever born of woman."<sup>37</sup> Politicians flattered and gained a grip on

<sup>34</sup>Henry L. Mencken to Grover C. Hall, 7 May 1924, GCH, Sr. Papers; Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 12 May 1928, Mencken Papers; Julian L. Harris to Grover C. Hall, 2 May 1926, GCH, Sr. Papers; Hamilton Owens to Grover C. Hall, 29 January 1925, GCH, Sr. Papers. Regarding Mencken, see also Grover C. Hall, "E. W. Howe and H. L. Mencken," *Haldeman-Julius Monthly* 2 (July 1925): 163-67. As a member of the Pulitzer award committee, Julian Harris nominated Hall for the prize he won (notation apparently by Julia Collier Harris on a letter from Grover C. Hall to Julia Collier Harris, 2 August 1927, Harris Papers). See also, William F. Mugleston, "Fruitful and Disastrous Years: The Life of Julian LaRose Harris" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1972), 176.

<sup>35</sup>Gerald W. Johnson, "Southern Image Breakers," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 4 (October 1928): 511.

such people so that these Southerners became the enemy of civilizing elements. Hall concluded that the consequence of such demagogic Southern leadership was to reveal human fears and ignorance. Thus, according to Hall, restraint came from public opinion rather than conscience so that journalists were responsible to devise an adequate social discipline for those Southerners.<sup>38</sup> Hall particularly focused on the Southern religious and racial prejudices as well as its anti-intellectualism. In an essay for *Scribner's Magazine*, he argued that religious fundamentalism so often attributed to Southerners was by no means universal in the South.<sup>39</sup> His basic objection to such fundamentalism was not so much because of its theology, but for the resistance to knowledge and culture represented in it. Hall's attitude toward race was liberal for the times. He was of course opposed to political race-baiting and the Klan-like violence. He believed that "in the South two races must live in neighborly fellowship."<sup>40</sup> Hall was a close friend of Dr. George Washington Carver and a keen supporter of Tuskegee Institute. He often bragged about his sympathy and support of blacks. Yet, he was not detached from his white Southern origins regarding race so that he did not campaign for the full civil rights of the black man. Hall did argue that at least as Americans, Southerners were "sound and trustworthy at heart."<sup>41</sup> He would not have agreed that the perpetuation of a Southern identity was important, although he would not have denied that it had been a historical fact. Hall favored the submerging of the Southern image, with its positive and negative attributes, into an Americanism.<sup>42</sup> Hall also believed Southerners were the only capable critics of the South. "Southerners," he wrote, "are the greatest experts on earth on the subject of southern faults and shortcomings."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Horace Hall to Grover C. Hall, Jr., n. d. (ca. 1960), GCH, Jr. Papers-Frazier. Horace Hall was the editor-publisher of the *Dothan Eagle* from 1939 to 1956.

<sup>39</sup>Grover C. Hall to Clark Howell, Jr., 29 November 1936, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*; Grover C. Hall to Julia Collier Harris, 2 August 1927, Harris Papers; Hall, *Autobiography*, 14.

<sup>41</sup>Hall, "We Southerners," 82-88; reprinted in *Essays in Liberal Thought*, eds. W. H. Thomas and S. S. Morgan (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928), 168-81.

<sup>42</sup>Grover C. Hall to James E. Chappell, 7 January 1935, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>43</sup>Grover C. Hall to Mildred Seydell, 28 December 1938, Mildred Seydell Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>44</sup>Cf. C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History* (rev. ed.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 3-25.

<sup>45</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. W. Howe, 10 December 1924, GCH, Sr. Papers.

Grover Hall's humanitarianism was nowhere better revealed than in his essay entitled "The Egregious Gentile Called to Account" published in the *Advertiser* in 1938. The world had witnessed a renewal of the historic persecution of the Jew in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the thirties, and Hall challenged the Gentiles to demonstrate a respect for the dignity of man in their attitude toward Jews. He stressed that the Jews were the same as other people, and that differences were between individuals as human beings. As to the origins of his own toleration, Hall wrote that "either I was born tolerant or learned tolerance and acquired rather broad human sympathies after I came face to face with the realities of life — at all events I came early in my days to like minorities and to distrust majorities with regard to all questions involving delicate human relationships and prejudice."<sup>44</sup> Hall's emphasis upon a complete re-examination of Gentile prejudices was for the sake of civilization itself for he warned that it was conceivable for a pogrom to occur in America as easily as in Russia given the current prejudice against the Jew.

The political creed of Hall also impelled his editorial-journalistic method. Of course, his best known political adversary was Senator J. Thomas Heflin. The aversion for Heflinism was based entirely upon Heflin's demagoguery toward race and religion. Hall felt that Heflin's sort of bigotry was not only inhuman and unfair, but illogical. He never failed to assail Heflinism whenever it reared its ugly face. Probably only his nephew Julian Hall of the Dothan *Eagle* pursued Heflin with greater vigor than Grover Hall. However, even though Hall was consistently antagonistic toward Heflin's tactics, he never bore any malice toward the man personally. Indeed, when the two were both Alabama delegates to the Democratic Convention in 1936, Hall observed that they were cordial and even friendly toward one another.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup>"The Egregious Gentile Called to Account," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 4 December 1938. The essay was reprinted in various places including the *Congressional Record* (7 January 1939), and was translated into several foreign languages. Numerous letters of commendation from a variety of individuals can be found in the GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>45</sup>Grover C. Hall to E. Cody Hall, 19 March 1937, HPH Papers. Governor Bibb Graves named Grover Hall vice-chairman of the Alabama delegation in 1936. Julian Hall was editor of the Dothan *Eagle* from 1924 to 1939. At his death, Grover Hall wrote that "Julian was just about the most gallant free lance we had

A similar stance was taken toward Bibb Graves, certainly one of the most powerful political figures Alabama has ever known. Hall disliked Graves' association with reactionary elements like the Klan and the undemocratic first-and-second-choice primary system. Hall fought against Graves' election in 1926 and 1934, and the *Advertiser* remained a vocal critic of the Graves' administrations. Hall, however, always accorded him respect as a gentleman, a humanitarian, and a man of integrity. At the end of Graves' first term as Governor, Hall paid editorial tribute to his ability.<sup>46</sup> In 1938, while serving as the liaison between the Governor and the Scottsboro Defense Committee, Hall came to know Graves even better. Truly, the two agreed in principle on the issue of the pardon for the Scottsboro defendants, although Graves eventually decided not to grant the pardons as Hall recommended.<sup>47</sup>

Hall's relationship with President Franklin D. Roosevelt was somewhat different. As the first editor in Alabama to advocate Roosevelt's nomination for President in December 1931, Grover Hall was one of Roosevelt's most fervent admirers.<sup>48</sup> Roosevelt recognized in turn not only Hall's support but also his ability. In a public letter to Joseph Pulitzer of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* in 1938 concerning freedom of the press, the President singled out Grover Hall as an example of a fearless editor. Roosevelt regarded Hall's call for more professionalism and better quality among the nation's publishers an antidote to the trend toward emphasis on the profit-making aspects of publishing.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Hall had no qualms about criticizing the President's policies. Hall said that "Under Roosevelt I saw a new world born, even though much that Roosevelt has done annoys me and will not receive

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in Alabama." (Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 27 December 1939, Mencken Papers).

<sup>46</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser*, 18 January 1931.

<sup>47</sup>A full, scholarly account of Hall's role in the Scottsboro negotiations can be found in Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1969), especially chapter eleven.

<sup>48</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt to Grover C. Hall, 22 December 1931, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>49</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, 2 November 1938, in *The Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938 Volume: Continuing Struggle for Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 577-83; reprinted in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Symposium on Freedom of the Press* (St. Louis: Post-Dispatch Co., 1938).



my approval.”<sup>50</sup> Specifically, Hall was critical of the “inequalities” of the Social Security Act and stated his skepticism about Roosevelt’s attacks on the power companies. In a 1939 editorial, Hall lashed out at one of Roosevelt’s R.E.A. bureaucrats whom Hall dubbed “a designing anthropoid,” “a fanatic,” and “a catfish wearing specs.”<sup>51</sup> The fact that the President made an effort to reply to the critique further indicated respect for Hall’s viewpoint.<sup>52</sup>

Grover Hall’s philosophy was consistently undergirded by his sense of fair play and his sportive wit. In 1937, when President Roosevelt appointed Senator Hugo Black of Alabama to the Supreme Court, the nation was mortified to learn of Black’s former membership in the Klan in the 1920’s. Defending Black in an editorial for the Baltimore *Evening Sun*, Hall laconically portrayed Black as “a humanitarian who has, I must own, though I never voted for him, the gift to make a purely intellectual approach to every question.”<sup>53</sup> Further, he said that the only thing he held against Black was that once Black had urged Hall to read Aristotle. Regarding his differences with Bibb Graves, Hall once jokingly inferred that he liked Graves “as much as any politician I ever knew, in spite of the fact that you require an extraordinarily large operating capital for your wonders to perform.”<sup>54</sup> Hall stated that he could trust Graves’ “heart as far as I could trust the heart of any other man in public life, even though God in his wisdom advises me not to vote for you upon the three occasions when you ran for king.”<sup>55</sup>

In summary, as a product of the “New South” era, Grover

<sup>50</sup>Grover C. Hall to Clark Howell, Jr., 29 November 1936, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>51</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser*, 1 September 1939. The object of the barbs was John M. Carmody.

<sup>52</sup>Stephen Early to Grover C. Hall, 6 September 1939, GCH, Sr. Papers. Early was Roosevelt’s secretary.

<sup>53</sup>Baltimore *Evening Sun*, 13 August 1937. In a letter to H. L. Mencken, Hall further suggested that “Hugo was never a religious or racial bigot.” (Grover C. Hall to Henry L. Mencken, 20 August 1937, Mencken Papers). Mencken could not agree, however, and still believed that “Hugo is a low swine. . . . I wouldn’t trust him eight inches.” (Henry L. Mencken to Grover C. Hall, 6 October 1937, Mencken Papers).

<sup>54</sup>Grover C. Hall to Bibb Graves, 14 November 1938, GCH, Sr. Papers.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.* Graves ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1922, and was elected twice in

Hall was less cognizant of the economic aspects of the "New South" creed partly because he knew little about the intricacies of personal finance let alone the complex economic vagaries of the Southern region. His "New South" vision was rather limited to the recognition of the South's troglodytic political-cultural mentality. Hall did not, therefore, necessarily equate economic prosperity with progress in other areas. A more apt description of Hall would be a "Southern progressive" who represented an emphasis on the urban-political concerns of other Southern progressives.<sup>56</sup> The influences which made Grover Hall a representative editor of the "progressive" South included especially his family heritage and youthful experiences with newspapers prior to becoming editor of the *Advertiser*. His journalistic concepts and the basic ingredients of his editorial style had been decidedly fashioned by 1926, although he continued to learn and improve the quality of his product. Perhaps the most pithy statement of Grover Hall's journalistic philosophy is a quote by C. P. Scott, the eminent publisher of the Manchester, England, *Guardian*, who said that a newspaper's "primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation, must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong. Comment is free but facts are sacred."<sup>57</sup> Grover Cleveland Hall could not have said it better, except that he would have undoubtedly added one of his celebrated *bons mots*.

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1926 and 1934.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. the definition of "Southern progressive" in Arthur S. Link, "The Progressive Movement in the South, 1870-1914," *North Carolina Historical Review* 23 (1946): 172ff.

<sup>57</sup>*Manchester Guardian*, 6 May 1926.

D. Gregory Jeane and Douglas Clare Purcell (Ed). *The Architectural Legacy of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley in Alabama and Georgia*. (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1978. pp. xv, 280. \$45.00)

This volume is introduced to us as "A Bicentennial Project published for the Historic Chattahoochee Commission by the University of Alabama Press." The buildings illustrated were selected on a basis of their presence on the endangered species list. Indeed, several had already been destroyed by the time the book was brought to press. Therefore, its prime objects are certainly laudable — to stimulate interest in the preservation of some very nice pieces of architecture and to document those that will be lost.

This stimulation is accomplished by examining a series of buildings from the various periods of the nineteenth and early twentieth century — illustrating them with photographs and drawings, describing their physical appearance, and tracing their history. A map is included so that a visitor to the Valley is never lost, plus a vicinity map to locate the total stranger.

The types of structures examined are broad — residences, religious and educational buildings, depots, offices, barns, jails, mills and grave shelters. They are divided chronologically and stylistically into six groups: folk houses, early central hall houses, Greek Revival architecture, Victorian architecture and architectural pot pourri, I and II. A glossary of architectural terms is included for those who find themselves beyond their forensic vocabulary.

The book obviously attempts to be more than just another coffee table volume of pretty pictures and the objects of this review is to evaluate the success of this attempt.

First as regards its stated intent to stimulate and document. It's a bit early to know its long range effect on the sixty odd structures in question; however, indications are encouraging. Several of the buildings examined have been saved as a direct result of the interest aroused during its preparation. In all probability, others will follow as its circulation widens.

The four destroyed prior to publication have been documented, at least on a regional level. Unfortunately, the drawings were not prepared on Historic American Building Survey Sheets so that in their present form they cannot be included in the H.A.B.S. collection in the Library of Congress. Pity — because as a part of that collection copies would be available to anyone at a very modest cost.

The photographs and drawings are absolutely first rate and Mr. McGlaun and Mr. Mullen are to be congratulated. Hats off also to the delineators of the West Georgia Chapter, A.I.A., who contributed their skills to the project. Editors Jeane and Purcell deserve high marks. Neither is an Architect or Architectural Historian, so we are spared some of the esoteric minutiae that might fascinate the student but overwhelm the layman. The descriptions are well written and totally adequate for the purpose intended.

Every reviewer has the obligation to quibble over something and I choose to quibble over the use of the word "pen." The glossary does not contain a definition that fits its use; nor do any of my dictionaries — architectural or standard. From previous reading of some of the references cited, I assume the term started as a derogatory description of a log animal enclosure that was subsequently roofed and occupied by humans — i.e. a single room with little refinement. The editors continue to apply the word in the description of buildings well beyond the log house. Thus the Kennedy house is said to be a single or double pen house with rear rooms added.

It looks to me like a four bay Greek Revival Cottage. There is a porch across the front, two principal rooms, each with a door to the front porch, no central hall, and two small rooms at the rear corners separated by a recessed porch. This room arrangement is extremely common all along the Gulf Coast, with and without the front porch. Normally, all elements were built at the same time. The French speaking builders called the two front rooms "Chambres" or "Salon" and "Chambre." The small rooms were "cabinets" and the rear porch was called a "cabinet galerie." The English speaking builders called them "rooms and porches" with the front rooms sometime called "parlors."

I wonder how the occupants of these houses, past or present, would react to having their "salons" and "parlors" downgraded to "pens."

On the other hand, the term is not employed in the discussion of the two jails — where its use might be most appropriate.

Joking aside — "The Architectural Legacy" is a success and a notable contribution to the literature on the Architecture of the South. I heartily recommend it.

Nicholas H. Holmes, Jr., FAIA, SOPA  
Mobile, Alabama

Todd L. Savitt. *Medicine and Slavery*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978. pp. 322 with illus. \$15.00)

*Medicine and Slavery* is a superior book. The research is thorough and up to date. The style is attractive, the insight preceptive and interpretation is judicious.

Dr. Savitt's discussions of sickle cell anemia, heat and cold tolerance, lactase deficiency, tuberculosis and other health problems common to blacks are up to date and well evaluated. The influence of sociological conditions, clothing, diet, hygiene and working conditions on diseases in the slaves are up to date and equally informative. His interesting information of alleged differences between susceptibility of whites and blacks to diseases is certainly enlightening. His information on the treatment of blacks confined to the Hospitals for the Insane throws a new light on this important subject.

I found this book to be excellent with unusual insight on medicine today as well as in the antebellum south.

Howard L. Holley, M.D.  
Anna Lois Waters Professor of  
Medicine in Rheumatology  
University of Alabama in Birmingham



Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. *Africans and Creeks From the Colonial Period to the Civil War*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), xiii, 286 pp. \$22.50)

This book, number 47 in the series of Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, is an account of the relationships between Blacks, Creeks and Seminoles. From Colonial times until the establishment of official activity between the United States and the Creeks, Blacks lived in the Indian nation under a rather loose arrangement. The first Blacks who lived among the Creeks, probably runaways from Georgia and Florida, were allowed to settle there with about the same status as other refugees. Later as the Creeks became better assimilated to the ways of the white man, some of the Indians purchased Black slaves. In Creek and Seminole country alike many slaves bought with annuities were settled in their own villages and allowed a high degree of freedom. Ownership of these slaves was a loose arrangement and their status frequently uncertain.

As time passed the wealthy mixed-blood Indians gradually developed a plantation system patterned after that of the white man. Although a formal slave code was adopted only after their removal to the West, the introduction of plantations, especially among the lower Creeks, caused the system to become nearly identical to that of the whites.

The Creeks, following what was to them a tradition, were divided in their loyalty during the American Civil War, with groups fighting on both sides. Following the war slaves who had belonged to the Creeks and Seminoles found some acceptance and civil rights in the Indian nations. Racism was probably never as prevalent among the Creeks and Seminoles as it was among the other Indians and Whites.

Mr. Littlefield has done an extensive piece of research on a difficult subject. There are few statistical records or synthesized accounts of Blacks held by the Indians. Thus the author has been forced to depend on extensive collections of individual narratives in order to present overall conclusions. This has caused Mr. Littlefield to draw broad generalizations some of which are neither clear nor to the point. Nevertheless the

author has accomplished an extremely difficult task in an acceptable manner.

The books appears to be accurate and fairly well researched, but there are minor errors. For example, on page 92 the author mentions the death of Benjamin Hawkins in 1817, while on page 115 he describes the emigration of the Creeks in 1833 under the direction of Chilly McIntosh and Benjamin Hawkins. Presumably this is another Benjamin Hawkins but there is no explanation. The reader might wish for better identification of some individuals and groups. The only serious flaw in Mr. Littlefield's research was his failure to use the Georgia Archives.

The book is a valuable contribution to historical knowledge. It will prove very useful to scholars and should be read by anyone interested in Black-Indian relations.

Frank L. Owsley, Jr.  
Auburn University











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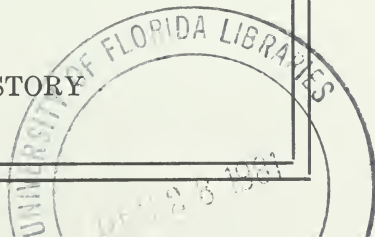
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# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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## THE ARREST OF AARON BURR: A DOCUMENTARY RECORD

edited by

Stuart O. Stumpf

During the summer of 1807, as the government was preparing the prosecution of Aaron Burr on treason charges, the Attorney General of the United States, Caesar A. Rodney, solicited an account of the arrest of the former Vice President. The Attorney General directed his inquiry to Nicholas Perkins, a federal land registrar in the Tombigbee region of the Mississippi Territory. Perkins and Lieutenant Edmund P. Gaines of the United States Army had been responsible for the identification and arrest of Burr on February 18, 1807.<sup>1</sup>

Perkins replied with a detailed account of the episode and its immediate aftermath. This narrative appears to be the only contemporary relation by a participant in the incident which ended the Burr conspiracy.<sup>2</sup> Although cited by W. F. McCaleb in his 1903 monograph on the conspiracy and published with other materials in *The American Historical Magazine* in 1896, most historians and biographers of Burr have neglected the Nicholas Perkins Papers located at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.<sup>3</sup> Instead, accounts of Burr's arrest have been based upon Albert James Pickett's *History of Alabama*. A conscientious mid-nineteenth century

<sup>1</sup>The most thorough treatment of the Burr conspiracy is found in the works of Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Burr Conspiracy* (New York, 1954) and *The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819*, Volume IV of Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (eds.), *A History of the South* (Baton Rouge, 1961), 261-96. Walter Flavious McCaleb, *The Aaron Burr Conspiracy* (New York, 1903; expanded ed., 1936). The introduction by Charles A. Bears, presents an interpretation of events most favorable to Burr. An excellent brief summary of the tangle of events and personalities is presented in Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815* (New York, 1968), 111-24. The Nicholas Perkins Papers are found in the collections of the Tennessee Historical Society, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Box B2, No. 242B.

<sup>2</sup>T. C. A. Rodney (undated), Perkins Papers.

<sup>3</sup>McCaleb, *Burr Conspiracy*, 233. "The Capture of Aaron Burr," *The American Historical Magazine*, I (1896), 140-53. This periodical was the predecessor to the current *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. There are several inconsistencies between the manuscript in the Perkins Papers and this previously published account.

historian, Pickett interviewed several surviving residents of the vicinity in which Burr was captured and corresponded with Edmund Gaines before the death of the retired officer in 1849. However, these interviews took place more than three decades after the events, helping to explain the discrepancies between Pickett's rather florid summation and the Perkins's statement.<sup>4</sup> Another account of the arrest is found in a unsigned letter which appears in J. F. H. Claiborne's *History of Mississippi*. Perhaps written by a representative to the territorial legislature from the Tombigbee district, Lemuel Henry, the letter was sent from Gaines's post, Fort Stoddert, late in February. In any case, the letter's author had returned to the area where the events had taken place and was basing his relation to a great extent upon community gossip.<sup>5</sup>

As the individual most responsible for the arrest of Burr, Nicholas Perkins provides the best record of the episode. A native Virginian, Perkins had been appointed by President Thomas Jefferson to serve as a federal land registrar. While serving in that capacity, he acquired extensive land holdings in the Tombigbee River Valley.<sup>6</sup> Following the arrest of Burr, Perkins agreed to take charge of a party of volunteers and regular soldiers who were to transfer the prisoner to the place of his trial. Perkins never reached his original destination of Washington, D.C., as in route he was ordered to transport Burr to Richmond. The young registrar confronted some considerable difficulties on his journey including an attempt at escape by Burr while they traveled through South Carolina. Even after the safe delivery of Burr, Perkins had problems gaining reimbursement for his party's travel expenses.<sup>7</sup> For a short

<sup>4</sup>Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama* . . . (2 vols. Charleston, 1851), II, 216-28. Among the works utilizing Pickett's study have been Abernethy, *Burr Conspiracy*, 221-24; William H. Stafford, ed., *The Blennerhassett Papers* (Cincinnati, 1864), 206, 214-23; James Parton, *The Life and Times of Aaron Burr* . . . (2 vols., Boston, 1881), II, 93-98; Nathan Schachner, *Aaron Burr, A Biography* (New York, 1937), 382-84.

<sup>5</sup>J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi, As A Province, Territory and State* . . ., (1880 reprint ed., Baton Rouge, 1964), I, 288-89.

<sup>6</sup>"Perkins, Nicholas 'Bigbee'" in Tennessee State Library and Archives, *Biographical Directory, Tennessee General Assembly, 1796-1969, Preliminary*, No. 25, *Williamson County* (Nashville, 1971), 38.

<sup>7</sup>Edmund P. Gaines to Perkins, February 19, 1807; Edmund P. Gaines to Perkins, undated, but with enclosed passport for Perkins and party dated February 27, 1807, Perkins Papers. James Madison to Lewis Ford, March 23, 1807, and Henry Dearborn

time following his return to the Mississippi Territory, Perkins served as Attorney General. After 1810 he settled in Williamson County, Tennessee, where he was a planter and a lawyer. Except for serving two terms in the Tennessee General Assembly, Perkins had retired from politics.<sup>8</sup>

Edmund P. Gaines, also a native Virginian, was a career army officer who at this early stage in a long and successful military career commanded the garrison at Fort Stoddert. An extremely troublesome frontier command, the fort was located just north of Mobile Bay which was then a part of Spanish West Florida. Gaines was uneasy about the presence of Aaron Burr, even as a prisoner, in an area where the sympathies of the settlers were favorable toward the former vice president and the attitude of the Spanish authorities was uncertain. For these reasons Gaines prevailed upon Perkins to transfer Burr out of the territory.<sup>9</sup>

The capture of Burr by Perkins and Gaines brought an end to his final flight for freedom. With the collapse of his complicated cabal obvious and his safety threatened by his former associate, General James Wilkinson, on February 5, 1807, Burr had fled from the small, territorial capital of Washington, a short distance from Natchez. Although he remained within the vicinity for about one week, he eluded detection. During this time Burr was not inactive; he met and corresponded with some of his confederates. Burr also wrote a note to Governor Robert Williams which denounced the governor's proclamation declaring him a fugitive. Apparently,

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to "the Officer who has charge Aaron Burr," March 23, 1807, *ibid.*, order Perkins to bring Burr to Richmond for trial. The difficulties of Perkins in receiving reimbursement and his expense account are recorded in Perkins to [George W. Hay ?], March 29, 1807; Perkins to [Dearborn ?], June 10, 1808; John Graham to Perkins, August 3, 1808; George S. Gaines to Perkins, November 13, 1808; "Expenses incurred by his (Perkins) Expedition with Aaron Burr to Richmond, Virginia," January 24, 1810, Perkins Papers.

<sup>8</sup>"Perkins" *Biographical Directory, Tennessee*, 38.

<sup>9</sup>The career of Edmund P. Gaines has been discussed by James W. Silver in "Edmund Pendelton Gaines and Frontier Problems, 1801-1849," *The Journal of Southern History*, I (1935), 320-44. Edmund P. Gaines' Confidential letters to Perkins, February 19, 1807, in Perkins Papers, expresses his concern and solicits Perkins' advice. One week later the letter of instruction and passport were presented to Perkins and his transfer party set out with the Prisoner. Edmund P. Gaines to Perkins, passport enclosed, dated February 27, 1807, *ibid.*



during most of this time Burr was accompanied by Major Robert Ashley.<sup>10</sup> Dropping from sight, Burr traveled in the direction of the Tombigbee region immediately north of Mobile in a last effort to gain at least something from his enterprise.<sup>11</sup>

During the period between his surrender to the Mississippi authorities on January 16, 1807, and his appearance before the Territorial Superior Court on February 3, Burr had been made aware of considerable unrest in that part of the Mississippi Territory. Indeed, while Burr was awaiting trial, legislative sentiment and expressions of editorial opinion denounced the Spanish who were in control of West Florida as well as General James Wilkinson, Burr's recent co-conspirator and the pensioned agent of Spain.<sup>12</sup>

In the territorial legislature James Caller, one of two representatives from the Tombigbee region, introduced a series of resolutions which stated that the harassment of the commerce of American citizens residing immediately above West Florida was no longer to be tolerated. Burr met privately with Representative Caller, Lemuel Henry, the other representative from the Tombigbee district, as well as Colonel John McKee, Indian agent and former associate of General Wilkinson. At this meeting Burr allegedly stated that since the Tombigbee settlers had been neglected by their government, they possessed the right to establish a new government for themselves, leaving the obvious implication that he would aid them in this task. Caller, for his part, reportedly assured Burr that he might find considerable support in the Tombigbee settlements for any enterprise which had the approval of the national government and which was directed at Spain. While in Natchez prior to his court appearance Burr met another resident of the Tombigbee valley, Major John Hinson. Burr may have made arrangements to stay at Hinson's home if it should be necessary

<sup>10</sup> Ashley was a former army officer then resident in New Orleans. Abernethy, *The Burr Conspiracy*, 219-21. Governor Williams' Proclamation is reprinted in J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi*, I, 284.

<sup>11</sup> Abernethy, *Burr Conspiracy*, 54.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-11. Abernethy quotes at length from the *Mississippi Messenger* of January 20, 1807, which urged its fellow citizens to "pause and reflect" upon the validity of the assertions against Burr. The paper attacked the "Military despotism" which Wilkinson had erected in New Orleans, and it pointed to the incongruity of American citizens armed against Burr's threat to invade Spanish colonies.

that he travel in the vicinity.<sup>13</sup>

On February 2, Burr's case came before the Superior Court of the Territory, presided over by Judge Peter Bryan Bruin, a partisan of Burr, and Judge Thomas Rodney, the father of Jefferson's Attorney General, Caesar A. Rodney. Judge Rodney was, nevertheless, a man who had been highly critical of General Wilkinson's abuse of military authority in Louisiana. The Grand Jury absolved Burr which is hardly surprising considering the public mood was very favorable to him. Judge Rodney refused to release Burr from his bond but allowed him to remain free upon his own recognizance. Burr protested and demanded an immediate trial in the apparent belief that he might be found not guilty. The following night he fled from the authorities. With Robert Ashley, Burr journeyed to the Tombigbee region. Instead of a hero's welcome, Burr was placed under arrest through the efforts of two ambitious young men, Lieutenant Edmund P. Gaines and Nicholas Perkins.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to the Burr trial which opened in August 1807 Nicholas Perkins sent to Attorney General Rodney a statement in which he described the events surrounding the arrest of Aaron Burr. Perkins's account is reprinted in full from a copy in the Tennessee State Library and Archives.<sup>15</sup> The inconsistencies of spelling, capitalization and punctuation are retained.

C. A. Rodney esqr.

Sir,

At your request I have committed to writing the circumstances of the arrest of Aaron Burr esqr. on the Tombigbe River in the Mississippi Territory.

I believe it was on the 18th of February last, about 12 o'clock in the evening or after I was at the court

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 211-12, 215-16; Claiborne, *Mississippi*, I, 286-88.

<sup>14</sup>Abernethy, *Burr Conspiracy*, 217-19. The newspaper report of the proceedings as well as the presentment of the Grand Jury were published in Claiborne, *Mississippi*, I, 283-84.

<sup>15</sup>Perkins to C. A. Rodney, (undated) Perkins Papers.

house for the county and District of Washington in the Mississippi Territory in company with Thomas Malone clerk of the said District Court and Theodore Brightwell Sheriff of the County of Washington when I heard the sound of horses feet as if coming on the road that passes near the house in which we were the Sheriff was in bed, I asked Mr. Malone what could people be after, riding at that time of night, he answered it was not uncommon at that place the moon shone very bright. I resolved to see them as they would pass that house for which purpose I went to the door when a man road by in a brisk trot, without making any stop or saying a word altho he passed within 20 feet of the door in which I stood.

I observed another person coming on at a small distance behind, who stopped when he came opposite the door and began enquiring the road to Major Hinson's of which I informed him, and telling him that it would be very difficult to get there in the night the bridges were broken and part of the way was a path only and that they had better stay at the tavern which I pointed out to him that was in the town, he replied they had come from the Chickasaws and had lost their horses up the country that evening which had detailed them but that he believed he could find the way and would go to Major Hinson's, and then road on after the one who passed first, and made no stop.

I then turned to the Gentlemen in the room and observed that those were very extraordinary men indeed, riding at that late hour of the night in strange country, determined to go on to Major Hinsons at the distance of 7 or 8 miles on a bad road over broken and dangerous bridges, passing by a public house to a private one, and that they must either have some bad design upon Hinson or his property, or that it was Colonel Burr making his escape through that country, I then requested one of the Gentlemen to accompany me for I was resolved to follow them and if possible to discover who they were or what was their business, the Sheriff Mr. Brightwell agreed to go with me, he

got out of bed dressed himself and taking our horses pursued them to Major Hinson's whither they had arrived before we overtook them, when we road up to the fence we found their horses tied there, and going into the yard met the Gentleman who had inquired of me the road at the court house whose name was Ashley but could not see the other who I afterwards discovered had got into the kitchen for the benefit of the fire there being none in the room that was opened for the strangers, after being there some time, the Sheriff was giving directions to the servant about the horses Mr. Ashley and myself in the house when the person who had been at the Kitchen fire came in, I observed his dress and every appearance to be extraordinary, as well as I can recollect he had on a white hat with a brim rather broad than otherwise a long beard, a checked Hankerchief around his neck a great coat belted around him to which was hanging a tin cup on one side and a butchers knife on the other. I began to think he must be Colonel Burr, and watched an opportunity of seeing his eyes by which I expected to know him at length I got a glance at his eye, as he looked aside at me, upon which I became confident this was Colonel Burr soon after I got my horse and left the house as if going back to the court house but after pursuing that road I turned and took the road down to Fort Stoddert where I arrived before the sunrise and informed Lieutenant Gaines of what I had seen and heard the preceeding evening and of my suspicions that the person with the white hat was Colonel Burr, he then agreed to go with me and selecting as he said [a] confidential sargent and three soldiers we set out on horse back up the country towards Major Hinsons. When we came within two or three miles of Major Hinson's we met Colonel Burr in company with the Sheriff Mr. Brightwell, we did not see them until we approached very near each other they were ascending a small hill, when we rode up to them Lieutenant Gaines asked if he was not Colonel Burr he answered in the affirmative and then Lieutenant Gaines arrested him some conversation passed between Lieutenant Gaines and Colonel Burr on the

subject of the arrest, at length Colonel Burr asked Lieutenant Gaines if he had any authority to arrest any other person with him, Lieutenant Gaines said he had not, then Colonel Burr requested that Mr. Ashley should be informed that he wished him to come to Fort Stoddert which I agreed to do if I should see him, and then Colonel Burr Lieutenant Gaines and the soldiers road off towards Fort Stoddert leaving Mr. Brightwell and myself at the place.

After they had got some distance from us I began to interrogate Mr. Brightwell about Colonel Burr, he said when Colonel Burr saw us he asked Mr. Brightwell who was that, or what did that mean (I do not recollect which) Mr. Brightwell replied that is Perkins and you are gone, the Colonel then clasped the bridle in both his hands saying Lord have mercy or God have mercy (I do not recollect which) this is as well as I can recollect what Mr. Brightwell told me was the expressions of Colonel Burr on our approach.

I then asked Mr. Brightwell what was Colonel Burrs conversation about me after I left Major Hinsons he said Colonel Burr told him he was confident that I either knew him or suspected him and had pursued him that night to Major Hinsons, Mr. Brightwell then acknowledged what has passed between him & myself he then enquired of Mr. Brightwell if he thought there was any person in the country who would arrest him and I think Mr. Brightwell said his answer to him was, he did not know of any one, he then asked if he Mr. Brightwell thought I could not be softened, I believe Mr. Brightwell told me that Colonel Burr was going to Mr. Mimms which is on the East side of the Alabama (but I am not certain) and that he Mr. Brightwell was to shew him the way to the ferry.

I then left Mr. Brightwell and pursued the road or path towards the court house, and before I reached that place overtook Mr. Ashley and we road together to the court house, I then wrote a letter to Colonel Callier informing him of the circumstances requesting



that he would meet me the next evening at the court house,<sup>16</sup> Mr. Ashley went with the message to Colonel Calliers, I had not told Mr. Ashley of Colonel Burrs arrest, but that Colonel Burr requested him to come to Fort Stoddert he observed Colonel had changed his plan or rout (I do not remember which).

When I came to the court house the next evening I found Colonel Callier and Mr. Ashley there, the Colonel told me that he had not told Mr. Ashley of Colonel Burrs arrest, but that he pretended to approve of Colonel Burrs conduct in order to sound Ashley as he said. Ashley told him that Colonel Burrs schemes were of aims to the Floridas and Mexico, Colonel Callier asked if Colonel Burr had a sufficiency of money to carry on his plan Ashley said he had about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, this is as well as I can remember the conversation that Colonel Callier told me has passed between him and Mr. Ashley, Colonel Callier and myself then walked to where Ashley was, and then the Colonel arrested him, Mr. Ashley asked what he was arrested for, and I told him it was for being one of Colonel Burrs party, he then denied that he knew anything of Colonel Burrs plans he had met with Colonel Burr by accident found him a pleasant traveling companion and had come with him to that place, I then told him that Colonel Callier had related to me the conversation they had had on that subject and it was unnecessary to deny what he had told the Colonel, Ashley said he had told the Colonel that he believed so, but never had told him that he knew anything about Col. Callier contradicted him, soon after which I got my horse and started [to] Fort Stoddert.

I did not arrive at Fort Stoddert until the next day, not long after my arrival to that place Lieutenant Gaines introduced a gentleman to me saying he was a Spanish officer, who I think he said commanded a Spanish armed vessal called Louisiana who has been up the river as I was told to purchase sea stores or some

<sup>16</sup>This was undoubtedly John Caller, the brother of James, who was a prominent planter and militia officer. Abernethy, *Burr Conspiracy*, 201-2.

things that were necessary for a cruise that he was about to undertake, and that he would not leave that place until next evening, the Spanish officer spoke no english as I heard, but conversed by means of an interpreter.

In the evening after the Spanish officer requested to see the prisoner (Colonel Burr) soon after which Lieutenant Gaines asked me whither it was proper I told him I thought not, but that I supposed Colonel Burr himself would object, and that he had better go and see him, Lieutenant Gaines went into the room where Colonel Burr was, and again returned into the room where the Spanish officer and myself was, holding a piece of paper in his hand, on which was some writing but what was written by I do not know, said to the officer it was improper that he should see Colonel Burr as he was then a prisoner of the United States and he Lieutenant Gaines then said as well as I can recollect Colonel Burr sends his compliments to Moralis<sup>17</sup> and his daughter and requests that he would send him some wine; and I think some other articles but do not remember what; and then gave the paper to the Spanish officer, who started off down the river towards Mobile in a short time, at which Lieutenant Gaines appeared to be alarmed, and said to me he was suspicious the Spanish would endeavor to rescue Colonel Burr and that he was unable to defend himself, as his pickets were pulled down and some of his men unfit as for duty, and then I consented to convey him to the city of Washington.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Don Juan Ventura Morales was formerly the Spanish intendant of New Orleans. Burr met with him during his 1805 western tour. In early 1807 Morales was at Mobile. Morales may have been involved with Burr and Wilkinson in their enterprise. Abernethy, *Burr Conspiracy*, 8, 29.

<sup>18</sup>In letters sent to General Wilkinson and Governor Williams announcing the arrest of Burr, Edmund P. Gaines expressed fears that Burr might be conniving with the Spanish in Mobile to obtain his release. The lieutenant also stated his view that in such an event his force was not sufficient to secure Burr's detention. He may also have feared that the prolonged presence of Burr might serve as a rallying point for anti-Spanish action by the American settlers. The same day he wrote to Wilkinson and Williams, Edmund P. Gaines sent his letter marked "Private" to Perkins requesting his advice and suggesting that Perkins lead a party which might

As to the affair at Chester S.C. when we came to the edge of the town I rode on one side of Colonel Burr and one of my party on the other, when we arrived near the middle of the town as I suppose, Colonel Burr leaped from his horse and asked if there was any Magistrate there and going in among several Gentlemen that were standing together in the street requested them to protect him from us, that we were taking him along without any authority, Colonel Burr was seated on his horse again and conveyed off immediately.<sup>19</sup>

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transfer Burr to Washington, D. C. for trial. Edmund P. Gaines to General Wilkinson and copy to Governor Williams, February 19, 1807, Perkins Papers, Edmund P. Gaines to Nicholas Perkins, February 19, 1807, *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup>Perkins refers here to Burr's attempted escape which occurred while transporting the prisoner northward.

THE SENATORIAL CAREER OF  
ARTHUR PENDLETON BAGBY

by

John M. Martin

In late 1841 Arthur Pendleton Bagby, then completing a second successful term as Governor of Alabama, was presented with an opportunity to seek a seat in the United States Senate when Senator Clement Comer Clay resigned. In many ways an obvious candidate, Bagby also had some political disadvantages: he was a longtime resident of Monroe County, and the vacant seat normally went to a North Alabamian; and he was strongly opposed by the Whigs, who charged that a "corrupt bargain" had been made between Bagby and Clay, in which the two had agreed that Bagby would hold the post for two years then step aside to allow Clay's return. Although Bagby had lived in South Alabama until his election as Governor and lived then in Tuscaloosa, he was apparently the choice of a majority of the Democrats even though a few North Alabama Democrats insisted that the seat should go to a North Alabamian as a "matter of right." Faced with Bagby's candidacy and those of several North Alabamians, the Democratic caucus of the General Assembly was unable to agree upon a nominee and decided that any party member could seek the seat.<sup>1</sup>

Very much opposed to Bagby, the Whigs hoped to combine their votes with those of eight to ten North Alabama Democrats and bring about his defeat. Encouraged by the Whigs, David Moore of Madison County, Speaker of the House, presented himself as the North Alabama candidate. On the first ballot, Bagby received 59 votes (57 Democratic and two Whig) and Moore received 60 votes (seven Democratic and 53 Whig) with eight votes scattered among other candidates. On the second ballot, after six Democrats and one Whig had shifted their votes to him, Bagby won by a vote of 66-59. Embittered by the result, one Whig editor declared that the "demagogue and

<sup>1</sup>Ruth Ketring Nuremberger, *The Clays of Alabama: A Planter - Lawyer - Politician Family* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1958), 64; *Huntsville Democrat*, November 20, December 4, 18, 1841, January 8, February 15, 1842, hereinafter cited as *Democrat*.

*renegade*" Bagby was a fitting successor for Clay, for the two were "birds of a feather."<sup>2</sup>

Following the election, debate continued throughout Alabama concerning the wisdom of electing Bagby to the North Alabama seat. Moore defended his unsuccessful candidacy on the grounds that, without a senator, North Alabama would lose its proper weight in government.<sup>3</sup> Others seconded the view, saying that Bagby could not adequately represent the Tennessee Valley. By early 1842, steps were being taken to insure Bagby's defeat if he later sought a full term in the Senate.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Bagby's defenders deplored the fact that the "coon-skin gentry" were attempting to stir up "division, jealousy, and discord in the Democratic ranks." They argued that Bagby had the support of a majority of North Alabama Democrats, that his current home was Tuscaloosa, and that he was an able person.<sup>5</sup>

When Bagby arrived in Washington, he found a government disrupted because of an impasse between factions of the Whig Party. Discouraged, he wrote his wife that the forthcoming session would "probably be a long one and certainly an unprofitable one." Insisting that politics had no charm for him, he expressed doubt that he would return for the following session.<sup>6</sup> Despite his early pessimism, however, Bagby soon became deeply involved in Senate matters and seemed to relish defending what he considered to be basic principles of the Constitution and fighting against Whig measures and the Whig leadership. His greatest pleasure must have come from his attacks on the Whigs for their disunity.

Bagby made his first major speech on June 3, 1842, in opposition to a section of the reapportionment bill calling for creation of congressional districts; he favored a general ticket concept similar to the one then in use in Alabama, declaring it to be "the only constitutional mode of electing members of

<sup>2</sup>*Democrat*, December 4, 1841; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, December 1, 8, 1841, hereafter cited as *Alabama Journal*.

<sup>3</sup>*Democrat*, January 8, 1842.

<sup>4</sup>*Democrat*, January 22, February 5, 1842.

<sup>5</sup>*Democrat*, December 4, 1841.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur Pendleton Bagby to Ann E. Bagby, February 26, 1842, Arthur P. Bagby Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.



the House of Representatives." Under the Constitution, Bagby stated, Congress could only fix the "time, place, and manner of holding elections," nothing more. Since the states or the people of the states were depositories of all other powers, any form of election by which any of the people of a state were deprived of the right to vote for the whole number of representatives to which the state was entitled was unconstitutional and "subversive of the rights reserved to the people of the several States." Not even the state legislatures, he asserted, could legally alter the provision. If Congress could violate the Constitution in this case, it could violate it in other ways. In answer to specific objections that had been raised against the general ticket system, Bagby first denied that the system was subject to abuse for partisan purposes and that it had been used for partisan purposes in Alabama. The people of Alabama, he insisted, had been influenced by "higher motives than the unprincipled thirst for political power." To the argument that the plan was "destructive of the rights of minorities" and in a sense disfranchised some of the voters, he replied that minorities had a right to the ballot box but not necessarily the right to be represented. Finally, he denied the argument of some that the plan would work for the advantage of large states and the disadvantage of the small states. If not amended, he declared, the bill called for the states to be accessories to their own degradation and for the power of Congress to be enlarged. The states, he predicted, would resist the districting arrangement. Denying that he was a nullifier, he, nevertheless, asserted that the proposed plan would be inoperative unless the states tamely submitted and allowed themselves to become "mere minions of federal power."<sup>7</sup>

Bagby charged that more attempts had been made to take away the rights of states, the liberties of the people, and the true principles of the Constitution during the session than in any previous period since the establishment of the government. The Whig Party, he alleged, sought an "augmentation and increase of the powers of the General Government at the expense of the rights of the states" which, if not checked, could

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<sup>7</sup>*Speech of Arthur P. Bagby, of Alabama, on the Motion of Mr. Wright, to Amend the Second Section of the Bill, for the Apportionment of the Representatives among the Several States, according to the Sixth Census* (Washington: Peter Force, 1842), 4-12.

lead to the "destruction of the liberties of the people." In his view, the apportionment bill struck directly at the right of suffrage, aimed a fatal blow at "the great citadel of popular rights and representative freedom," and inflicted a "fatal wound" upon the Constitution. Balance in the Constitution, he declared, must be restored and preserved, and the "rude tide of federal encroachment" must be rolled back.<sup>8</sup>

In July, Bagby continued his attack on the Whig Party during a speech opposing extension of the power of federal courts to allow them to grant writs of *habeas corpus* to citizens of foreign states whose criminal acts had been committed under the authority of a foreign state. From the beginning of the government of the United States, he asserted, one party had sought to "enlarge the powers of the Federal Government . . . at the expense of the State Governments and the people." The measure in question, he said, would augment the powers of the national government at the expense of the states. It was especially dangerous since it represented a "silent encoachment" not likely to attract much attention because its effects would not be seen and felt by most people. Citing Article Three of the Constitution, he demonstrated that the framers of that document had clearly defined the powers of the national judiciary. Recognizing that judges might overstep authorized powers and become to an extent "the law making power of the government," he declared, these framers had granted only specific powers to them. If the proposed act were passed, it would permit a person who had been arrested under state laws to be brought before a federal judge and discharged by action of that judge. Such action by a federal judge might result in damage within a state or in the refusal of a state to carry out the action proposed and collision between federal and state authority. In case of conflict, he felt, the state must triumph because such a decision could not be enforced against a state. In the McLeod case, which had caused the proposal to be brought forward, said Bagby, New York had followed a proper course. Whatever the source of McLeod's authority, he had violated New York law. To him, it seemed unbecoming to the character and dignity of the United States to change its laws in obedience to the demands of another nation. To those who argued that the act would

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<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 12-15.

help to preserve peace, he answered that the best step to take even to preserve peace was to preserve the Constitution inviolate. Personally, he would prefer war if the alternative was to degrade the country.<sup>9</sup>

When the Webster-Ashburton Agreement calling for settlement of a boundary dispute in Maine and other differences between the United States and Great Britain came before the Senate, Bagby voted against it. He later explained that the vote had not been a partisan one, but that he questioned whether the United States by treaty negotiations could "cede away" a portion of its territory.<sup>10</sup>

On July 30, 1842, Bagby delivered a long speech in which he attacked the tariff bill then before Congress and questioned the motives of Whig sponsors. Senators, he declared, were being called upon to throw the mantle of protection over the manufacturing interests at a time when the treasury was empty and when the public credit was at a low point. Admitting that some industries needed protection in order to prosper, he argued, nevertheless, that the protective system violated basic principles of taxation which required that a government first determine the amount of revenue needed for economical and efficient operation and then levy taxes which operated as equally and as lightly as possible on the great body of taxpayers, whether agriculturalists, manufacturers, or merchants. As proposed, the tariff would be "unequal and unjust" in its operation. Manufacturing, a minority element of domestic industry, would be aided by protection at the expense of other elements, including merchants, planters, and farmers. Manufacturers, moreover, would be placed in a position of being suppliants to government and might become slaves. Southern interests, he claimed, were also endangered by the proposed oppressive system similar to those which had brought "blight and mildew" and near ruin to the section in the past. The plan under consideration would, he said, plunder ten for the benefit of one. Agricultural and merchant classes, a factor of ten, would be required to make an "eternal" contribution, to bear "perpetual burdens" for the benefit of a small manufacturing class. The unjust system, he asserted,

<sup>9</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Twenty-Seventh Congress, Second Session, 554-555.

<sup>10</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Ninth Congress, First Session, 265.

would make the rich richer and the poor poorer, for laboring classes would have to pay as much for necessities of life as would the millionaire.

The Constitution, declared Bagby, authorized taxation for revenue only, not for protection or even incidental protection. Some protection, he conceded, would result from any tariff, and he had no objection to such protection if the purpose of the tariff was revenue. Instead of producing revenue, however, protection actually tended to diminish income by excluding foreign articles. Deploing the combination that had arisen between manufacturers and politicians of the country "destructive of the highest and best interest of the country," he charged that ambition and avarice, the love of power and the passion for wealth, dominated the elements seeking a tariff increase.

In answer to those who said that Southerners did not know their true interests, Bagby told them that Southerners would not be blinded by slanted arguments and figures. They knew that a protective tariff raised prices and reduced revenue. It provided benefits for the manufacturer at the expense of consumers. Petitions from manufacturers and from other groups bore out such a contention. Despite the efforts of supporters of protection, he hoped that the principles of free trade would prevail in the near future rather than a program dedicated mainly to avarice and ambition.<sup>11</sup>

Speaking later in opposition to inclusion of a provision in the tariff bill calling for distribution of proceeds from the sale of public lands, Bagby attacked both the concept of distribution and the Whig supporters of the measure. Distribution, he declared, was the most extraordinary legislation then before Congress from the standpoint of its constitutionality, the genius of government, and the condition of the treasury. It was, he said, a "clear and palpable" violation of the Constitution, for nothing in that document suggested that Congress could distribute proceeds from land sales. Since the national government was one of limited powers, the Constitution did not authorize the national government to become a "grand paymaster" for state debts. The public lands, he stated, had been acquired

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<sup>11</sup>*Democrat*, October 22, 1842.

by deeds of cession from the states or by treaties with foreign countries. They were the property of the United States and should be used for the common benefit of its people. There was no more logic, he asserted, in giving away the proceeds of public lands than in giving away other property or tax revenues; for, if land revenues were disposed of, other sources would have to be used to finance the needs of government. Adoption of distribution, he argued, would greatly distort the state-federal power relationship, and, indeed, would be a threat to the independence of states. Esau, he pointed out, satisfied his hunger but lost his birthright. Finally, explained Bagby, distribution was illogical because the treasury was empty, the revenue system was aground, and public credit was weak both in the United States and in Europe.

Bagby then turned to an attack on the motives of the Whigs who proposed to give away part of the national "estate." Distribution, he said, would require an increase in taxes and tend to raise the price of public lands by creating an incentive for states to ask for higher priced lands. Both taxpayers and prospective homeowners would suffer. Distribution, he suggested, had been proposed to "create the necessity for raising the duties on imports, in order to afford additional protection to domestic manufacturers." Designed to conciliate a great monied interest for political purposes, it would plunder the treasury and oppress the many to provide profits for the few engaged in manufacturing. The protective tariff, he exclaimed, was "the most unjust, oppressive and corrupt" policy which "an unholy combination between avarice and ambition ever inflicted upon any country." It stood on "the necks of the people of the South" who had been oppressed and ground down long enough. The people of New England who had been disloyal during the war of 1812, he alleged, were now the "pets and foster children" of the national government and were being supported in a program which was unpatriotic and selfish and in "the teeth and jaws of the constitution." Denying a charge that he was prejudiced against New Englanders, Bagby maintained that he respected them for their industry, frugality and enterprise, and for their revolutionary contribution, but that he opposed certain other traits held by some of them: a grasping disposition that made them willing to take money from one section and give it to another, a willingness to sup-



port a plan to put money into the hands of manufacturers at the expense of others, and sponsorship of measures that made businessmen suppliants to government. As for himself, he would not allow the protective system to exist for an hour.

In the same speech, Bagby excoriated the Whigs for their division and their treatment of President John Tyler. General William Henry Harrison, he exclaimed, had, by dying, been spared from becoming an "instrument in the hands of others, for the purpose of bringing irreparable evils upon the country." The relentless and unexampled opposition to President Tyler, he suspected, was owing to his refusal to become "clay in the hands of the potter, or a potter in the hands of Clay." While maintaining that he did not want to interfere in a family quarrel, Bagby reminded the Whigs that they should have known Tyler's views when they nominated him for the vice presidency because he was in line to be President if Harrison died. Since the Whigs nominated and elected Tyler, declared Bagby, they were responsible for any misfortunes resulting from his becoming President. Contrary to what the Whigs asserted, Tyler had not been seduced from Whig principles by the Democrats; he had long held the views for he was being attacked. Although some insisted that Tyler had violated the Whig creed, Bagby said he had not been informed of any Whig creed in 1840 except coonskins, red-pepper, hard cider, and a log cabin. How long, he asked, was the warfare between Whig factions to be kept up at the expense of the country? Tyler was President, and, under the Constitution, he had responsibility for the conduct of the office. Although some spoke of Tyler's "one-man power," Tyler, in fact, had "not a single friend" in the Senate with courage to avow support and only a "corporal's guard" of supporters in the House. Never before had institutions been in less danger from executive encroachment. Distribution, charged Bagby, was part of a catechism prepared by Henry Clay in 1841. Now, however, senators were being urged to support distribution rather than to submit to executive dictation; and, for opposing the Whigs in Congress, Tyler was being blamed for excessive use of the veto power. By the Constitution, Bagby reminded them, the President was made the "executive guardian" of the whole people and, as such, could use the veto to prevent adoption of any legislation he opposed. Although he was politically opposed to the President, asserted Bagby, he would support Tyler.

From the beginning, Bagby said, he had had anxious forebodings that a party had come to power consisting of vast numbers with great wealth and great talents but without any principles and controlled by leaders whose main objective was the gratification of "restless and vaulting ambition." Materials were, he felt, present within the Whig Party for a "splendid edifice" but no cementing principle to sustain the edifice. The Whig Party was as "discordant as the tongues of Babel," with bank and anti-bank elements, tariff and anti-tariff elements, distribution and anti-distribution elements, as well as other discordant groups. In it were men with good principles, bad principles, and no principles. Unmindful of dignity, he said, it had come to power on the basis of coonskins and log cabins and electioneering "without a precedent in the history of civilized nations." The public had been led to believe Whig control would lead to payment of the public debt, restoration of public credit, and a sound currency, but they had been disappointed. Instead of positive results, Bagby feared, Whig control would lead to the decline and fall of states, the dissolution of the Union, the overthrow of the Constitution, and the subversion of public liberty. Pleading with all party members to support either federalist or republican principles, he warned that the country could not survive continued "strife and wild uproar."<sup>12</sup>

While Bagby was in Washington during 1842, speculation continued in the Alabama press about who would be chosen by the state legislature for the full senate term beginning in 1843. Clearly, antagonisms left over from the previous election had not healed. Some disgruntled North Alabamians continued to complain that North Alabama lacked representation, and reports were circulated that Clay was ready to "take up the mantle" if called upon. Although Alabama Whigs conceded that no Whig candidate could be chosen, several prospective Democratic candidates were identified including Bagby, Clay, David Hubbard, and J. E. Saunders. Despite rumors that Bagby would not seek reelection, his supporters kept his candidacy alive and maintained that he was popular, that he had performed well in the Senate as a defender of southern rights, and that he could "grapple" effectively with others in the Senate.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*Democrat*, December 24, 1842.

<sup>13</sup>*Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, November 30, December 21, 1842, hereafter cited as *Independent Monitor*; *Democrat*, October 15, November 19, 26, December 17, 1842.

In a December letter to a leader in the Alabama legislature, Bagby wrote that he would continue to serve in the Senate provided he had the support of a majority of the Democratic Party. It was not necessary, in his opinion, to give representation to different sections of the state, for he could serve the interests of the "whole state." Subsequently, the Democratic caucus agreed to support Bagby, and he was elected by the legislature without formal opposition, receiving all except eight votes scattered among six other candidates.<sup>14</sup>

Partly because of the timing of the election and partly because of his health, Bagby was delayed in returning to Washington until late January, 1843; however, he missed little of importance in the unproductive short Third Session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress. In brief speeches, however, Bagby continued to attack Whig projects and to defend the interests of the South. On one occasion, he spoke against a resolution which appeared to provide special treatment for water-rotted hemp from Kentucky to Missouri. Prices of American hemp, he said, should not exceed the price of foreign hemp of similar quality.<sup>15</sup> In another speech, he supported a plan to indemnify President Andrew Jackson for longstanding claims, pleading with the Whigs not to make a partisan issue of the subject and to follow a policy of "simple and exact justice."<sup>16</sup>

Early in the First Session of the Twenty-Eight Congress, Bagby was drawn into the discussion of a resolution from Massachusetts proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution restricting congressional representation to free population. Complaining that "every expediency" had been used to bring the subject of slavery before Congress, he charged that the Massachusetts resolution threatened to "lay the axe" at the very root of a principle that sustained southern institutions. He questioned whether the Senate should approve printing of resolutions that were "seditious and incendiary" and sought the accomplishment of an act that many in the South and elsewhere had been laboring for years to prevent. Resolutions should not be published, he declared, which amounted to "treason against

<sup>14</sup>*Alabama Journal*, December 21, 28, 1842; *Democrat*, December 24, 31, 1842, February 25, 1843.

<sup>15</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Seventh Congress, Third Session, 263.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 302.

the rights and interests" of his constituents.<sup>17</sup>

Later in the session, Bagby presented resolutions of the Alabama legislature denying the admissibility of the Massachusetts resolutions. These resolutions declared that slave representation involved "terms upon which the Union was formed" and that any measure to abolish such representation involved "bad faith on the part of a sister, having a direct tendency to weaken the bonds of mutual interest and good feelings" which had bound the Union together. Proclaiming that the Alabama resolutions accorded with his own opinions, Bagby proposed that they be printed and that Massachusetts resolutions also be printed.<sup>18</sup>

Early in 1844, Bagby joined in debates concerning a Senate proposal for gradual reduction of tariff rates. Although he opposed a protective tariff and recognized "the injurious operation" of the existing tariff upon the southern section of the Union, he said he questioned the propriety of a tax measure being initiated in the Senate.<sup>19</sup> In a later speech lasting two hours, he declared that he never viewed the compromise tariff of 1833 with the same favor that some had expressed. It had been, he felt, "calculated to do more harm than good" because it left the impression that one side had demanded more than it was entitled to and that the other side had asked for less than its just rights. Resistance had resulted which he trusted would never "be abated till it succeeded in abolishing the system of protection which threw the burden of taxation on the real labor and industry of the country, for the exclusive benefit of a small and exclusive class." The Act of 1842, he charged, was of questionable constitutionality because it had been designed for protection rather than revenue. Incidental protection, he believed, was constitutional only if it arose from a tariff designed for revenue, not if the purpose of the tariff was protection of "any branch of industry by contributions levied upon other branches of industry." Nevertheless, the people of some states had become "intoxicated" with the exciting stimulant of protection and were demanding more.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Eighth Congress, First Session, 176.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 581.

When the Texas annexation treaty came before the Senate in 1844, Bagby voted with the minority in favor of it. Although he made no recorded speech at the time, he later wrote that he had voted for the treaty with reluctance because he doubted whether the power to acquire Texas, by treaty or otherwise, could be found in any express grants within the Constitution. The annexation of Texas, he said, was not analagous to the purchase of Louisiana. One involved the purchase of a distant province; the other involved one independent nation merging itself into another. Unlike some, he did not believe that annexation would tend toward the abolition of slavery. Instead, there would be an increase in demand for slave labor in proportion to the expansion of the area in which slaves could be employed in production of the great staples. If he erred in his vote, he stated, it was in supporting annexation in violation of his strict construction views in order to carry out the wishes of his constituents.<sup>21</sup>

At this (point in) time, Bagby was in the orbit of Thomas Hart Benton. Philosophically opposed to both the views of the Democratic faction led by John C. Calhoun and of the one led by Martin van Buren, he had taken this third alternative. Both Bagby and Benton had reservations about the nomination of James Knox Polk for the presidency by the Democrats in 1844. According to one Polk supporter, Bagby sneered at Polk's nomination "repeatedly in the presence of coons" thus giving them encouragement. Remaining in Washington during the summer of 1844, he refused to frank any documents not being sent to Alabama, a state which was already safely Democratic. Because of Bagby's attitude, he was charged with being one of the "silent spectators" of the campaign and possibly a traitor "giving aid and comfort to his enemies."<sup>22</sup> After Polk became President, however, Bagby disproved the latter charges and became one of Polk's firmest supporters.

When the Second Session of the Twenty-eight Congress

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<sup>21</sup>Letter of Arthur P. Bagby, Senator in Congress, to the People of Alabama (Washington: J and G.S. Gideon, 1845) 4, 10, 13, hereinafter cited as *Letters of Arthur P. Bagby*.

<sup>22</sup>H.C. Williams to Andrew Jackson, November 26, 1844, James Knox Polk Papers, Library of Congress; Charles Sellers, *James K. Polk: Continentalist, 1843-46* (Princeton: University Press, 1966), 188, hereinafter cited as Sellers, *Polk*.



met in late 1844, the Texas issue was still at the forefront, and various schemes were presented to bring about annexation without use of the treaty power. In his annual message, President Tyler argued that the election of Polk indicated that the people wished to see Texas annexed "promptly and immediately." Congress, however, was still a holdover group with roughly the same membership that had defeated the Texas treaty in the Senate earlier in the year. Some members were prepared to support annexation on almost any basis; some were opposed to annexation on any basis; others, including Bagby, had serious questions about the propriety of annexation and/or the means to be used for annexation. At least two constitutional issues were clearly delineated by Bagby and others: whether it was constitutional to annex a fully organized foreign state and whether any territory could be constitutionally annexed except by treaty.<sup>23</sup> On January 25, 1845, the House of Representatives approved a series of resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas as a state, for Texas to keep her public lands and her public debts, and for the creation of up to four additional states from the territory of Texas, the question of slavery in the new states to be determined by the Missouri Compromise agreement. The House resolutions were promptly rejected by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the meantime, however, Thomas Hart Benton had presented several alternative proposals in the Senate, a final one on February 5, 1845. Prepared in consultation with Bagby and others, the plan called for the admission of Texas as a state "as soon as the terms and conditions of such admission" had been agreed upon and the cession of remaining Texas territory had been arranged "by the government of Texas and the United States."<sup>24</sup> Bagby urged that the Benton resolution not be sent to the Foreign Relations Committee because time was limited and because a majority of the committee were hostile toward annexation. Two problems, he said, should be considered, the question of annexation and the mode of annexation. The issue was not a party matter and should be considered in terms of the welfare

<sup>23</sup>*Letter of Arthur P. Bagby*, 4-6; Frederick Merk, *Slavery and the Annexation of Texas* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 121-126.

<sup>24</sup>*Letter of Arthur P. Bagby*, 5-6; Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years' View; or, a History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty years, from 1820 to 1850*, (New York, D. Appleton, 1856), II, 632-634, hereinafter cited as Benton, *Thirty Years' View*.

of the country as a whole.<sup>25</sup>

At this stage, passage of annexation resolutions by the Senate presented a tricky problem. The Whigs still controlled the body by a majority of 28-24. Nineteen Democrats were thought to be in favor of annexation; 22 Whigs were thought to be against it; nine members were considered doubtful, including five Democrats (among them Benton and Bagby) and four southern Whigs. To carry any proposal, the annexationists had to secure all Democratic votes and three Whig votes, and some of the doubtful senators had serious reservations about the House plan. Bagby, for example, doubted the constitutionality of the proposed procedure, objected to the extension of the Missouri Compromise line because he felt Congress could not exclude slavery anywhere, and questioned whether Texas, a foreign state, could be acquired and admitted directly into the union.<sup>26</sup>

At an historic night session on February 25, Bagby spoke against the House resolutions for over two hours. Proclaiming that he had constitutional principles and moral principles, he said that he would not be guided by the mere results of a presidential election. The country faced trouble, he declared, if popular elections were to be used to settle all questions. The Senate had to deal with two main issues: the annexation of Texas and the admission of Texas as a state. The question was not whether a "*new state*" would be admitted but whether "*foreign states*" could be admitted into the Union. The people had spoken out in favor of annexation, but they had not decided that it should take place in violation of the Constitution. Bagby preferred the plan proposed by Benton, but he was prepared to support the House resolutions if they could be modified to conform to the Constitution. Although he was later attacked for his opposition to the unamended House resolutions, the *Daily Globe* commended Bagby for "laying open to the Senate" the real difficulty which threatened defeat of annexation in time for the problem to be corrected.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, 247.

<sup>26</sup>*Letter of Arthur P. Bagby*, 5-6; Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, 634-635; Sellers, *Polk*, 186-187.

<sup>27</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, 351-352; Washington *Daily Globe*, March 3, 1845, hereinafter cited as *Daily Globe*.

Prior to the time when Bagby made his speech, he and other Democrats had drawn up an amendment to the House resolutions calling for the Benton proposal to be combined with the House resolutions and, in consultation with House members, had determined that the proposed amendment would receive support in the House. Furthermore, they had obtained endorsement of this plan by President-elect Polk who apparently had been the one who suggested that the Benton scheme be combined with the House resolutions. After Bagby's speech, the compromise amendment was presented to the Senate by Robert J. Walker, a friend of Polk who (although he had not helped draw up the plan) realized that modification to the House proposals had to be made to insure acceptance of annexation. Soon after the Walker proposal was presented, a vote was taken on the combined package, and it was approved by a vote of 27-25. All Democrats supported the plan along with enough Whigs to insure passage. Later, The House of Representatives passed the amended resolutions by a greater majority than that body had given for the original resolutions. President Tyler then moved immediately to bring about the annexation of Texas under terms of the original House resolutions, and Polk concurred in his decision. The Bentonians were disappointed in Polk because they thought he had committed himself to follow the Benton procedure for annexation. Bagby later complained that friends of Polk had assured him that the Benton plan would be used and that Polk had failed to follow through on the agreement.<sup>28</sup>

For his speech against the House resolutions, Bagby was attacked almost immediately in a communication from a Washington correspondent to the Richmond *Enquirer* which was published on February 28. Because Bagby had spoken against the House resolutions, even suggested that they were unconstitutional, the correspondent said that he was considered to be a "treacherous deserter" by his fellow Democrats. When Dixon Hall Lewis of Alabama had risen to reply to him, moreover, Bagby had silenced Lewis by sending him word that he would vote for the resolutions with slight modifications. As a consequence, the anti-Texas speech was never answered.

<sup>28</sup>*Daily Globe*, February 27, 1845; *Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, 351-352; Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, 635-637; *Letter of Arthur P. Bagby*, 6-9; Sellers, *Polk*, 189, 215-218.

In a speech defending himself, Bagby called the report an "atrocious calumny" and charged that the allegations were "foul, unfounded, and villainous falsehoods." Denying that he had been forced to recede from a position he had taken for less than honorable reasons, he said that he had not sent a message to Lewis and had not conferred with him about Texas. The only statement of his intentions had been made in his speech when he said he would support the House resolutions if the Benton plan were added as an amendment. Robert J. Walker confirmed the truth of what Bagby said and pointed out that Bagby, at the time he made his speech, was already aware of Walker's plans to offer an amendment including substantially what Benton had proposed and had promised to support the amendment. Benton then pointed out that the Senate resolutions were as much Bagby's as his own.<sup>29</sup> Bagby later wrote that he had been attacked by the friends of annexation for demanding a compromise that was necessary to secure passage of any annexation resolution. If the Benton alternative mode for annexation had not been included, he declared, a few would have voted against the unamended resolutions and thus have defeated annexation. Indeed, he had "saved Texas" by taking an unpopular position.<sup>30</sup>

Almost immediately, Bagby came under attack in the Alabama press for his stand on the House resolutions. His speech was described as uncalled for and injurious to the cause of annexation. In it, said a critic, he had taken a position indicating that the South was divided on the constitutional question. Bagby had been inconsistent concerning annexation, moreover, because he had voted for the "unconstitutional" House resolutions as part of a package which gave Tyler authority "to do just what he had avowed was unconstitutional." Friends of annexation, including other members of the Alabama delegation, were said to be "amazed and astounded" by his actions. Bagby stood alone, echoed another newspaper, "despised and execrated." The *Florence Gazette* charged that Bagby's actions had disqualified him from administering his senatorial functions "with honor, advantage, or virtue to his constituents," and a correspondent of the *Mobile Herald and Tribune* called him weak and unstable. No other Alabamians, said he, had

<sup>29</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, 388.

<sup>30</sup>*Letter of Arthur P. Bagby*, 7.

objected to the House resolutions. Bagby, he declared, had "abandoned for a time his duty to the people of Alabama in favor of Benton, Tappan & Co."<sup>31</sup> Another critic called on Bagby to explain whether he had abandoned his Alabama residence and whether he had visited the state within the last year or two to which Bagby replied that he had not abandoned his Alabama residence and that he had visited the state every year he had been in the Senate.<sup>32</sup> In defense of Bagby, his friends pointed out that he had supported the rejected treaty of 1844, that he had insisted on the incorporation of an amendment that would win additional votes for annexation, and that he had supported the amended resolutions. In insisting on the modification, they maintained, he had contributed to the success of annexation; for, without the Benton amendment, the resolutions would have been defeated.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, illness in Bagby's family prevented him from returning to Alabama to defend himself at the end of the congressional session in March, 1845. In defense of his position, however, he later wrote two public letters, one in September and another in November. In the first, he admitted that he had opposed the House resolutions, partly because they recognized the principle of the Missouri Compromise; but he contended that he had probably saved annexation by demanding inclusion of the Benton amendment. Both General Andrew Jackson and President-elect Polk, he added, had approved the compromise approach. If he had kept quiet and voted for the unamended plan, annexation would have been lost because several senators would have voted against it.<sup>34</sup> In his November letter of sixteen printed pages, Bagby repeated some of the same points and gave a detailed accounting of his course beginning in 1844. He had, he said, reluctantly supported the 1844 treaty but had opposed the House resolutions because of his constitutional views. To him, it was vital that Texas be acquired before it was admitted to the Union; the Benton proposal permitted this procedure to be used. Annexation

<sup>31</sup>Huntsville *Southern Advocate*, March 21, 1845, hereinafter cited as *Southern Advocate*; Mobile *Herald and Tribune*, October 28, 1845.

<sup>32</sup>Arthur P. Bagby to G.W. Gayle, published in *Democrat*, October 1, 1845.

<sup>33</sup>*Democrat*, November 12, 1845.

<sup>34</sup>Arthur P. Bagby to \_\_\_\_\_, September 24, 1845, published in *Democrat*, October 29, 1845.



would not have been approved, moreover, without the Walker amendment. Indeed, said Bagby, Walker had paid him the compliment of saying that he had "*saved Texas*." Following presentation of Walker's compromise proposal, Bagby pointed out, he not only had voted for the compromise package but had taken "unusual pains" to induce others to vote for it.

In answer to those who had questioned whether he would vote for final annexation of Texas, Bagby wrote that he had read the constitution of Texas and found it republican in form and that he would "cheerfully vote for her admission into the Union." Although he had understood that Polk had planned to appoint a commission to negotiate with Texas as called for in the Benton proposal, Polk had approved steps taken by Tyler for immediate annexation. He did not agree with the mode used, but the deed had been done. Now that Texas had dismantled her national government, she "must not be disappointed." Even if he voted for annexation, however, he would not consent to the abolition of slavery north of the Missouri Compromise line; for, if the power to limit slavery were ever conceded, Congress could extinguish domestic rights in all the southern states. Under the circumstances, he pleaded with the people of Alabama to make their judgment of him upon the principles of "justice and impartiality."<sup>35</sup>

True to his word, Bagby spoke in support of Texas statehood at the succeeding session of Congress. Although he still questioned whether the Constitution permitted Congress "to admit foreign states into the Union," he said that the State of Alabama had long before instructed its senators to "use their best exertions" to bring about annexation. Since Texas had "disrobed herself of her sovereignty," Congress must admit or reject her. After Texas had been admitted into the Union, however, he said that Congress would not have the right to prohibit slavery, for states entering the Union must enter "on terms of equality with the original states," and citizens must maintain "all rights of property that attached to them as citizens of the United States."<sup>36</sup>

Following settlement of the Texas issue, Congress turned

<sup>35</sup>Letter of Arthur P. Bagby, 4-16.

<sup>36</sup>Congressional Globe, Twenty-Ninth Congress, First Session, 91.

its attention to the Oregon question. In 1844 Polk had been elected on a platform calling for the reoccupation of all of Oregon. Early in his administration, however, he had offered to establish the boundary along the 49th parallel of latitude only to have the offer rejected by the British. In his State of the Union Message in December, 1845, Polk recommended that the convention with Great Britain calling for joint occupation be terminated. Subsequently, reports of adverse British reaction led some to fear war with England and demand that war preparations be begun. Speaking against a measure designed to expand the United States Navy, Bagby minimized the danger of war. The United States and Britain, he stated, had first agreed to joint occupation in 1818 and had agreed in 1827 to extend the arrangement indefinitely with the understanding that it could be terminated after proper notice. Neither party, therefore, should consider its rights violated by a decision to terminate the agreement by the mode provided in the agreement itself. The United States, he said, had simply decided to end a temporary condition and establish a permanent arrangement. Even if Britain objected, measures short of war were preferable. The hearts of the American people should be prepared for peace, not war. Preparations for war could be delayed until additional information became available. Meanwhile, no halfway premature measures should be adopted. Denouncing those who poured out "bitter abuse" on the British, he called Britain "one of the most intelligent, most enlightened, most Christian nations on the earth" and said that a "peaceful and honorable result" was less likely if abuse continued.<sup>37</sup>

In early April, Bagby spoke at length in support of the joint resolution calling for implementation of Polk's recommendation that the British be given notice of termination of joint occupation. Both the United States and Great Britain, he noted, had asserted title to the territory and, to some extent, had occupied it. Since inaction would not lead to a resolution of differences, he favored giving notice whether the United States had a right to none of the territory, some of the territory, or all of the territory. The United States, he believed, had the "best title in existence" to all of the territory based on discovery and exploration and on the inheritance of Spanish claims. Although some senators envisioned a war with its

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<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 263-266.

attendant bloodshed, suffering, and cost, Bagby said the danger was minimal. Passage of the resolution, indeed, would be the best means of preserving peace. Whatever the result, he maintained, it would be best to ascertain what was right, do it, and accept the consequences. Giving the termination notice involved no more than carrying out the terms of a contract. The United States had bargained earlier for the right of termination and had been granted the right. War should not come between "two great and intelligent nations" over issuance of the proposed notice. If war came, it would not be because of a fault of the Polk administration, for Polk had offered to accept the 49th parallel as a boundary and had withdrawn the offer only after the British had rejected it. Such a move was supported by the "rule of law, reason, and morality." If the British later chose to settle for a boundary on the 49th parallel, moreover, the United States could accept it or reject it without tarnishing its honor. The subject was a national question, he declared, not a party one.

To Bagby, the acquisition of Oregon was one of "the inevitable steps" in the progress of the United States in its "destiny as a Nation." He looked forward "with hope and exultation" to the time when "the tree of liberty, planted by the labor and watered by the blood of the heroes of the revolution" would "throw its luxuriant branches" across the majestic Rocky Mountains, when "the oppressed and downtrodden" of other nations would flock to the shores of the Pacific and find peace, security, protection, and liberty. The United States, he declared, was entering a new era in its history. Its population was growing rapidly; its resources were abundant; its economy was expanding; education and the arts and sciences were unfolding hidden treasures and the mysteries of nature; free government and religious toleration created "political prosperity." The United States stood "on an eminence," the eyes of other nations directed toward it. All transactions with "the rest of mankind" should be handled in such a way as to promote the fulfillment of its "destiny as a nation."<sup>38</sup>

In the busy First Session of the Twenty-Ninth Congress, Bagby also worked closely with the Polk administration in seek-

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<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 647; Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 11, 1846.

ing adoption of the Walker Tariff. Staying in regular contact with Polk, he worked to keep wavering senators in line and to help defeat unwanted amendments.<sup>39</sup> In a brief speech, he announced that he was ready "to take the bill as it was" because he "approved of its great principles which were to reduce and to equalize the taxation of the country." In voting for the measure, he would have the pleasure of voting out "one of the most odious measures with which the country was ever oppressed. . . , the tariff of '42." He could not, he said, understand the views of some Northern Democrats. If the Northern Democracy could be kept alive only by supporting "that system of unjust taxation under which the South had so long labored," he felt, "there was an irreconcilable difference between southern and northern Democracy." The system of taxation should be an equitable one, operating "equally on all classes of taxpayers."<sup>40</sup> In another speech, he exulted that the "shackles of commerce and the unjust restrictions of the protective system" were about to be broken, that the people were to be taxed, "not for the benefit of a long highly-favored class," but for the support of government, economically administered, and that manufacturers, glutted with "a long course of favoritism and protection," were about to be denied some of their special privileges.<sup>41</sup>

On July 24, 1846, Bagby spoke at length against a bill providing large appropriations for the improvement of rivers and harbors. The bill, he feared, was destined to pass even though it was "fundamentally wrong in principle" and fraught with "disastrous consequences" for the future welfare of the country. Reviewing the evolution of constitutional interpretations since the days of George Washington, Bagby asserted that the powers of Congress were limited and that the country was in danger if these limitations were ignored. There were, he declared, no express grants in the Constitution authorizing Congress to make improvements on rivers and harbors; the words

<sup>39</sup>Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845-1849*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1910), II, 29, 33, 46, hereinafter cited as *Polk Diary*.

<sup>40</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Ninth Congress, First Session, 1057.

<sup>41</sup>*Speech of Hon. A.P. Bagby, of Alabama, on the Bill making Appropriations for Rivers and Harbors, delivered in the Senate of the United States, Friday, July 24, 1846* (Washington: Blair and Rives, 1846), 7, hereinafter cited as *Bagby Speech on Three Million Bill*.

were not even mentioned. Such improvements could not be considered necessary and proper, and they could not be justified under the war power, the commerce power, or the general power. Harbor improvements, he conceded, could be justified if needed by the Navy, but river improvements could not be justified. If Congress could supply money to pay for river improvements for war purposes, he said, it could also construct railroads within states. Although Congress could regulate commerce, he argued, it could not provide for the creation of commerce. It also had control over territories, but it could not appropriate money for river and harbor improvements within them.

The bill, charged Bagby, called for the support of about a hundred items, none of which would be passed if standing alone. Yet each senator, he surmised, would support it to insure that his state would get its share. "Logrolling" was involved, and the proposal was "unconstitutional, unwise, inexpedient, unjust, corrupting in its tendency, and destructive of all morality in legislation." It would make the Constitution a "dead letter." A "new and hungry swarm" would be invited "to suck out the vitals" of the treasury and bring "great and lasting evils" upon the country. Calling it a "monstrous system," Bagby said he would resist it more than any other measure; for in it he saw "the exhaustion of the treasury, the ruin of the Constitution, and the destruction of all morality in legislation." If the bill passed, he hoped Polk would veto it.<sup>42</sup>

While Congress considered the Oregon question and domestic matters, tension between the United States and Mexico was mounting. After American troops along the Mexican border had been fired upon and some killed and wounded in April, 1846, President Polk asked for a declaration of war. Although Bagby did not speak at the time the war issue was being debated, he later explained his views on the subject. Mexico, he said, had "commenced the war." Prior to the annexation of Texas, she had announced that she would consider annexation as an aggression against her rights. After annexation, she had then initiated war by shedding "American blood on American soil." In doing so, her purpose had been to "reconquer Texas." Subsequently, the United States had

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<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 4-7.



declared war but only after Mexico had opened hostilities. Unless the annexation of Texas was improper, there was nothing "unholy or unjust" about a war for repelling the Mexican attack. Mexico had no claim on Texas, said Bagby, for Texas had established her independence in 1836, had maintained it for nine years, and had finally been annexed by the United States in 1845. Even though the first blood had been shed along the Rio Grande, the dispute with Mexico was over "the whole of Texas." The Polk Administration, he felt, could scarcely have avoided war with Mexico once annexation had occurred.

Believing that the war was a "righteous one," Bagby maintained that it should be pursued with "all possible vigor." Since the Mexican objective was to reconquer Texas, the United States should prosecute the war until Mexico renounced that area and agreed to other appropriate concessions. He denounced those who called the war a "Presidential war," begun to satisfy Polk's ambition and lust for gain. Polk, he insisted, should not be treated as a "political free booter and robber" who had launched a war against "a weak and distracted sister republic" in defiance of the Constitution, morality, and patriotism in order to satisfy his ambitions.<sup>43</sup>

In February, 1847, Bagby spoke in favor of prosecuting the war with increased vigor. Commending the Senate for providing "all the means asked by the executive to carry on the war," he was critical about delays and about divisions within the body. Three alternatives had been suggested: vigorous prosecution of war, establishment of a defensive line within Mexico, and withdrawal east of the Rio Grande. The best course for the United States, Mexico, and humanity, he felt, was the first one. Establishment of a defensive line would lead to a protracted war, he said, for Mexico would not seek peace; meanwhile, Americans would be left exposed in scattered fortifications which the Mexicans could attack at will. He favored stepping up the war effort, forcing Mexico to sue for peace, and demanding such terms as the events of war indicated.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup>*Bagby Speech on Three Million Bill*, 5-9.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-3.

About the same time, Bagby refused to support a resolution commending General Zachary Taylor and his men for the American victory at Monterrey. Taylor's terms for Mexican surrender, he said, represented the first time that a defeated army had determined the terms of surrender and the first time that any army had marched out with drums beating and colors flying. Bloodshed, Bagby conceded, might have been spared for the time being; but more blood, he predicted, would be shed when the paroled Mexicans joined the main armies.<sup>45</sup>

Early in the Mexican War, President Polk began considering plans for sending commissioners along with the army for the purpose of negotiating a possible peace treaty. In December, 1846, he had a "full conversation" with Bagby about the subject, after which Bagby consulted with others concerning possible membership of the group. Subsequently, when a bill came before the Senate to appropriate three million dollars to defray cost of bringing the war to "a speedy and honorable conclusion," Bagby strongly supported the measure. Much good, he argued, could come from passage of the bill while no harm could possibly result from it. Expressing astonishment that some of the most vehement opponents of the war were at the same time among the most strenuous in opposition to a measure that would promote peace, he suggested that they did not want to confide such a large sum to the discretion of the President. There appeared, he felt, to be a secret dread on the part of some that territory might be acquired as a result of the war and concern about the disposition of it. To those, it seemed, the United States could make war but lacked the capacity to avail itself of the "fruits of war." As for him, if Mexico did not agree to a fair and honorable peace, he would organize territorial governments in areas already held, press the war "into the heart of Mexico," and "put the country under contribution" as fast as it was occupied. Conquests, he asserted, were recognized by the "laws of nations throughout the civilized world."

Turning to the problem of slavery in the territory to be acquired, Bagby attacked those who were demanding that no treaty be ratified unless slavery was excluded, by the fun-

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<sup>45</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Twenty-Ninth Congress, First Session, 317.

damental law, from acquired territory and denounced the "spirit of abolition" that was "on the prowl." He could not agree, he said, with those who predicted that disunion would result from acquisition of territory and told Southerners to check their "lust for dominion" and "determination to extend the area of slavery" lest they be held accountable for dissolution of the Union. Stressing his love for the "glorious Union," Bagby declared that the Constitution secured equal rights to the states of the union and the essential rights of life, liberty, and property to American citizens. Were this interpretation of the document to be abandoned, he would become a sectionalist in his views; and the South would "live alone" in his memory, his energies, and his exertions. He would never consent, he exclaimed, that territory acquired by common blood and treasure be "open and free for the citizens of one portion of the Union, with their property, while the citizens of another portion of the Union were excluded from it." In his opinion, the South was united on this issue "*as one man.*" There was only one way to avert conflict, he warned his friends in the North, "conceding to the people of every section of this Confederacy the equal rights secured to them by the Constitution of the common country." He hoped that the "sense of justice of the American people" would prevail and that madness, folly, fanaticism, and uncontrolled ambition would not bring about a dissolution of the Union.<sup>46</sup>

In a letter to a committee in Tuscaloosa dated November, 1847, Bagby further elaborated his views about the war and war related issues. A foreign war, he said, was not a party matter. He had uniformly supported the largest appropriations of men and money requested by the government and expected to do so as long as the war continued. The achievements of American troops, he declared, were "unequalled in the annals either of ancient or modern warfare." By actions against the United States prior to the outbreak of war, he stated, Mexico had placed herself "without the pale of civilization"; "entire subjugation" was the alternative left to her. Nothing in the past history of Mexico indicated that she could maintain a separate existence. Her people were "incapable of self government." The country had had 17 revolutions in 25 years; most of its people were immersed in "barbarous ignorance," and most

<sup>46</sup>*Bagby Speech on Three Million Bill*, 9-16; *Polk Diary*, II, 268.

of its leaders were morally depraved and corrupt. In the past, the Mexican government had been a "burlesque" of the republican form involving a "military despotism" under "petty tyrants." Under the blighting influence of her rulers, he said, Mexico had sunk lower and lower in the "scale of degradation." Her people lacked education and were under the influence of an ecclesiastical tyranny. Under the circumstances, he saw no alternative except to "reduce the country to absolute subjection" and extend the jurisdiction of American laws and institutions over it. For some time, in fact, he had been convinced that the incorporation of Mexico into the Union was one of the inevitable steps "in the fulfillment of [the American] destiny as a nation."

In the approaching session of Congress, Bagby predicted that there would be three factions in relation to the war: supporters of withdrawal to the Rio Grande, with the relinquishment of all conquests; supporters of a defensive line, and supporters of an all-out war for the conquest of all of Mexico. He favored the latter because the conquest of Mexico would be more compatible with American honor and of her future tranquility and security and best for Mexico itself. Mexico would be saved from anarchy and misrule and her people would be given freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and press, trial by jury, and other benefits that went with the American system.

Bagby had, he said, no fears that annexation of territory would lead to disunion. Indeed, he looked upon the addition of new states as a means of strengthening the Union. Settlement of the Oregon question had produced benefits, and he looked forward with "hope and joy" to the time when the United States would control the territory "from the lakes to the Isthmus of Panama, and from ocean to ocean." Such a development would mean "elevating and improving the condition of men, extending the area of civil and religious freedom, and the sphere of constitutional, regulated liberty." The United States, he declared, was divinely destined by the force of its "example in the great experiment of free government to liberalize and enlighten all the nations of the earth."

Territory acquired from Mexico, he added, must be acquired

"without any prohibition, limitation, or restriction on slavery." It did not comport with the Constitution or the eternal principles of justice for the United States "to acquire territory by the joint blood and treasure of the whole country" and then "to attempt to create a distinction in regard to the rights of property of any description" within the territory so acquired. The government of the United States must provide "equal benefits and equal burdens."<sup>47</sup>

Throughout most of 1847, a debate went on in the Alabama press about whether a person to succeed Bagby in 1849 should be selected by the 1847 session of the General Assembly or by a later session. Some argued that an early selection was needed so that Alabama would be guaranteed representation if a special session of Congress were called in 1849. Others maintained that the election should be delayed until the results of the general election in 1848 were known. One seat, held by Dixon Hall Lewis, was already vacant and had to be filled in any case. Bagby's critics repeated attacks that had been made against him in 1845 when he had questioned adoption of the House resolutions dealing with the annexation of Texas and reasserted the claim that North Alabama was entitled to a seat. Others criticized Bagby for not staying in Alabama enough and for failing to pay his debts promptly. One correspondent suggested that he "lingered under the shadow of royalty" in Washington instead of trying to "heal rents" in his popularity in Alabama. In Bagby's defense, his friends noted that he had, in fact, made possible passage of the Texas resolutions by insisting that the Benton Proposal be added and pointed out that Bagby had vigorously supported the war effort even though some Democrats had gone over to the Whigs. His speech on the Three Million Dollar Bill, they declared, showed him to be a "fearless and eloquent representative of the true opinions of the Democrats of Alabama." He was not alone, they said, in having debt problems.<sup>48</sup>

Bagby had his speech on the Three Million Dollar Bill published and, prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, returned to Alabama and visited different parts of the state.

<sup>47</sup>Albert P. Bagby to Tuscaloosa Committee, November 11, 1847, published in *Democrat*, December 1, 1847.

<sup>48</sup>*Democrat*, May 5, June 2, July 14, 28, 1847; *Southern Advocate*, September 10, 1847.



In a letter to a committee in Tuscaloosa, later published, he expressed at length his views about the war. Although extensive efforts were made to bring about a vote in the 1847 General Assembly and although opposing candidates were identified, the election was postponed.<sup>49</sup>

On January 25, 1848, Bagby introduced a series of resolutions in the Senate aimed at counteracting the provisions of the Wilmot Proviso. Bagby's resolutions declared that Congress had "no constitutional power to abolish or prohibit slavery in any State or Territory," that conquest was a "legitimate means of acquiring territory" and was "so recognized by the laws and universal practice of nations," that if territory were thereafter acquired by the United States by treaty or otherwise, Congress could not legally "exclude slavery from the territory whether by treaty stipulation or by act of Congress," and that such territory should be "equally free and open to the citizens of all the United States, without any limitation, prohibition, or restriction, in regard to slaves, or any other discrimination of property whatsoever." Speaking briefly in support of the resolutions, he maintained that the first represented what he understood to be the "true position" regarding the powers of the national government over slavery. Unlike some of his colleagues, he felt, as indicated in the second resolution, that conquest was a legitimate means of acquiring territory. Such territory, acquired by the "joint blood and treasure of the common country," should be "equally free and open" to the citizens of all the states of the Union.<sup>50</sup>

Two days later, Bagby presented another resolution declaring that neither the people nor the legislature of a territory had "any constitutional power" to exclude slavery from such territory, that people of a territory or the legislature of the territory possessed only those powers that were delegated to them at the time a territorial government was established, and that, inasmuch as Congress had no power to exclude or prohibit slavery in a territory, it could not delegate the power to exclude slavery to a territorial legislature or the people of a territory.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup>*Independent Monitor*, November 9, 23, 1847, January 13, 1848; *Southern Advocate*, December 25, 1847, January 22, 1848.

<sup>50</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirtieth Congress, First Session, 241-242.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 261.

On April 11, 1848, following a number of postponements, Bagby spoke at length in defense of his resolutions. The truth and correctness of the first resolution, he declared, should be accepted and proclaimed. The American people should be informed whether their rights stood upon "the adamantine principles and guarantees" of the Constitution or floated in "the visionary imaginations of moonstruck philosophers, or pretended philanthropists." Slavery, either for good or evil, either as a blessing or a curse, existed and would stand until the Constitution was changed or was undermined by the "insidious torrent" which was lashing against it. Law, precedent, practice, and principle, he said, supported the acquisition of territory by conquest. The third resolution, denying the power of Congress to exclude slavery from acquired territory, he stated, rested upon the Constitution. It was sustained, moreover, by considerations of "equity, truth, and justice" and was fortified by the "eternal principles of reason and right." The Constitution represented "a compact between sovereign states." Its provisions should be interpreted according to "their obvious meaning and impact." Territory could be acquired, and such territory should be free and open to all the citizens of the United States without any restrictions on slaves or other property. Justice, he insisted, demanded that slave owners be allowed to carry their property into the territory.

Even if slavery did not already exist in acquired territory, argued Bagby, Congress could not exclude the institution so as to promote the interests of one portion of the people and prejudice or exclude the interests of other citizens. Those who supported exclusion of slavery from the territories, he exclaimed, were contending for principles "destructive of the rights of the southern states, destructive of equality among the citizens of the United States." The Union, he warned, "would not survive the establishment of such a doctrine an hour." Noting that some of his colleagues had said they would not interfere with slavery where it existed, Bagby reminded them that they could not interfere, for slaveowners derived their rights from the Constitution. If their constitutional rights were denied, they would "no longer consider it worth preserving." Referring to his supplementary resolution, Bagby pointed out that territorial governments had only such powers as derived from the United States Government. It should be

obvious, he said, that Congress could not delegate to a territorial government authority that it did not itself have. Nor could current inhabitants of a territory make decisions that would deny rights to those who migrated later. All American citizens were entitled to the enjoyment of equal rights in the territory obtained from Mexico, he maintained, "else liberty and equality" under the American system were but phantoms, and the "guarantees of the Constitution vain, deceptive illusions." The Constitution, he stated, protected the right of slaveowners to hold their property; while it existed, they could not be deprived of property except in violation of that instrument. Despite Bagby's vigorous defense of the resolutions, they attracted little support and were eventually tabled by a vote of 24-9.<sup>52</sup>

When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo reached President Polk in early 1848, he conferred with Bagby and others. At that point, Bagby expressed doubt that the document would be approved. Despite reservations, he later voted for the Treaty when it came before the Senate because it was presented by the administration and because he did not want to cause the United States to be involved in an act of bad faith. He did not believe, he later explained, that the terms were the best that could have been made "for the protection, promotion and advancement" of American interests.<sup>53</sup>

In the spring of 1848, the white inhabitants of the Mexican province of Yucatan offered to give the United States "dominion and sovereignty" over that peninsula in exchange for military aid against revolting Indians. Alarmed by the possibility of European intervention, Polk conferred with Bagby and others and sent the correspondence to the Senate along with a special message expressing his concern about foreign occupation but not recommending intervention.

In a later speech supporting occupation, Bagby noted that Polk had not recommended intervention and had left the decision to Congress. Considering conditions in Yucatan, in the United States, and in the world, Bagby said he favored occupation.

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<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 617-618, 773.

<sup>53</sup>*Polk Diary*, III, 368; *Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirtieth Congress, First Session, 635.

People in that province had offered sovereignty and dominion over the area, and the Monroe Doctrine neither sustained nor forbade such a course. Although there was a slight possibility that Great Britain would intervene, he felt that she was in no position to spare forces with which to conquer a continent. At few times, therefore, would it be as safe for the United States to move into an area. The United States, said Bagby, should not tax its own people to bestow charity, but it could do so on the grounds of policy and self-preservation. Since Mexico was a conquered country, he believed, the United States had a duty to extend such protection to Yucatan as Mexico would have provided if she had not been left weak by defeat.

Speaking as an expansionist whose wishes had still not been satisfied, Bagby denounced those who were alarmed about manifest destiny and thanked God that he believed in it. To him, it involved "application of the proper instruments to carrying out the great designs of Providence," and it could never be applied better than acquisition of the miserable and degraded races in Yucatan or all of Mexico. "Masterly inactivity" was not the appropriate action. Since Mexico could not protect Yucatan, the United States should protect it; and, once in control of the territory, should hold it. He favored adoption of a plan permitting the United States "to occupy Yucatan most effectually" until she could sustain herself or was annexed to the United States. He would move immediately to occupy the area and later decide how to dispose of it. His wishes to secure the province, however, were not satisfied, for Whites and Indians in Yucatan settled their differences and withdrew the offer before congressional action could be taken.<sup>51</sup>

In a June, 1848, speech dealing with a proposed territorial government for Oregon, Bagby again spoke out against both legislation unfriendly to slavery and the concept of popular sovereignty. Referring to the resolutions he had presented earlier, he stated that they were "sanctioned by every principle of the Constitution" and "every consideration of sound policy and equality." It was not right, proper, or constitutional, he

<sup>51</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirtieth Congress, First Session, 634-636; Julius W. Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1955), 292-293.

declared, to exclude any portion of the American population from a territory. "You are," he told his colleagues, "about to erect a barrier around one of those territories over which a portion of the people can never leap, unless they leave their property behind them." Although he was willing to allow the people of Oregon to form a temporary government, sufficient for all purposes and subordinate to future action by Congress, he said he was opposed to any action which would allow a territorial legislature to pass a law by which some citizens would be excluded. Although he conceded that Oregon lay north of the 36°30' line and that slavery was not likely to go there, he said that he could not support inclusion of a doctrine repulsive to many and "a direct, unnecessary, and gratuitous insult in the teeth of the people of the South." So far as he was concerned, if exclusion tainted the bill, the people of Oregon could "go without a government until the day of judgment." He had always opposed the concept of the Missouri Compromise because he felt Congress had "no right to compromise" away provisions of the Constitution and because the Missouri Compromise was "no compromise at all." True, it had smothered sectional fires for a time, but others had broken out periodically which, he feared, would "eventually destroy the Constitution." No "unorganized group" in a territory, he declared, had political power nor could a few thousand people living in a territory legally exclude other groups. To apply the concept of popular sovereignty would be to give to "unorganized aggregations of individuals" the same political power as that possessed by the largest and oldest states in the Union.<sup>55</sup>

By early 1848, Democrats were becoming concerned about the selection of a presidential nominee for the forthcoming election. Although Polk had announced earlier that he would not be a candidate for a second term, Bagby and others who visited Polk in January urged him "not to commit himself irrevocably against serving a second term" should the party renominate him. Pointing out to him that the United States was involved in a foreign war and that there were divisions within the Democratic Party, they suggested that his nomination might be the only means of restoring party harmony. Despite the arguments of his colleagues, however, Polk pre-

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<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 691.



pared a letter to the 1848 convention declining the nomination. After Polk read the letter to him, Bagby expressed regret that Polk was declining the nomination and assured him that he preferred him to "all others."<sup>56</sup>

A few days later, on June 1, 1848, Polk offered Bagby an appointment as Minister to Russia. Bagby and others were caught by surprise because Polk had not discussed the appointment with anyone, even with members of his cabinet. After considering the offer briefly, Bagby accepted it and resigned from the Senate. The position as Minister to Russia involved a high honor, and monetary arrangements associated with the position made it possible for him to resolve some of his financial problems.<sup>57</sup>

During his seven years in the Senate, Bagby had served the people of Alabama well. If he had not achieved greatness, neither had he been a mediocrity. In support of southern interests, he had consistently insisted on strict adherence to the Constitution, defended the institution of slavery and fought to insure that it could go into newly acquired territory, supported (with reservations) the annexation of Texas, sustained the war effort with vigor, and contributed significantly as an advisor to President Polk during the critical period of the Mexican War and the attendant peace negotiations.

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<sup>56</sup>*Polk Diary*, III, 319-320, 456.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 473, 478; *Southern Advocate*, June 24, 1848.

## THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY STORE REVISITED: A TEST CASE

by

Kenneth R. Wesson

Discovery of new sources of historical raw data is extremely rare but still happens occasionally. One such recent "find" is the 1873 account ledger of the John C. H. Jones General Store.<sup>1</sup> Analysis of the ledger, and comparison with other extant ledgers of the period, reveals not only whether or not the store fit the supposed norm in its operation but also depicts the many and varied transactions carried on by even rural storekeepers. Furthermore, to some degree, the ledger reflects the trade activities of rural Southerners, their habits, and their predicaments.

The Jones store was located in the now-extinct town of Fairfield, Pickens County, Alabama, on the eastern bank of the Tombigbee River. Founded in the 1830s, Fairfield thrived during the Tombigbee steamboat era and then declined, as did so many other small river towns, with the coming of the railroad. When the Alabama, Tennessee, and Northern Railroad bypassed the town in 1907, Fairfield's population migrated one mile east to the railroad and there formed Cochrane.<sup>2</sup> By 1910 the town of Fairfield was uninhabited.

Until the coming of the railroad, the town maintained its existence and John C. H. Jones was a prominent citizen there. In 1870 the Fairfield precinct of Pickens County contained a population of 2,131, consisting of 238 whites and 1,893 blacks.<sup>3</sup> The 1880 census shows the "Village of Fairfield" as having a population of 65.<sup>4</sup> John C. H. Jones is listed in both the 1870 and 1880 census returns as a physician, the latter occupation

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<sup>1</sup>The ledger was found by, and is in the possession of, Tommy Kimbrell of Cochrane, Alabama.

<sup>2</sup>W. Stuart Harris, *Dead Towns of Alabama* (University, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 1976), 78.

<sup>3</sup>United States National Archives and Records Service, 9th Census. Alabama, Pickens County, 1870, Population, microcopy no. 593, roll no. 36.

<sup>4</sup>United States National Archives and Records Service, 10th Census. Alabama, Pickens County, 1880, Population, microcopy T-9, roll no. 2.

probably seeming more prestigious than "merchant." He was graduated from the University of Nashville, served in the Civil War as a private from Pickens County in the 42nd Alabama Regiment, and was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1874. Subsequently, Jones became a member of the Pickens County Medical Association.<sup>5</sup> From April, 1878, to May, 1892, he served as postmaster at the Stone Post Office;<sup>6</sup> Stone's Ferry operated about one mile up-river from Fairfield and may have been the location of the Jones store, though the account ledger has "Fairfield" written under Jones' name and the 1880 census list Jones as residing in the "Village of Fairfield." Regardless, it is evident that John Jones was an active citizen and a viable part of community life in Fairfield, which was generally the rule with country storekeepers.<sup>7</sup>

There is little reason to doubt that Jones' store also conformed to the norm in its physical characteristics. The country store's square face has been termed a badge of the trade. The inevitable front porch, cat and "cathole," and bulging stove, located near the center of the building, were fairly common features of most stores.<sup>8</sup> The typical general store was literally packed with a wide variety of goods including medicines, books, dry goods, hardware, groceries, tobacco, and liquors;<sup>9</sup> the Jones

<sup>5</sup>James F. Clanahan, *The History of Pickens County, Alabama, 1540-1920* (Carrollton, Al.: Clanahan Publication, 1964), 36, 262, 266.

<sup>6</sup>Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-1971. In the National Archives and Records Service, microcopy no. M-841, Alabama, roll no. 3. The Fairfield Post Office had been discontinued in July of 1866. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Lewis E. Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 184-216, depicts the usual antebellum social life of the country storekeeper as one of prominence and community-mindedness. An earlier and more condensed version of Atherton's standard monograph is Fred Mitchell Jones, *Middlemen in the Domestic Trade of the United States, 1800-1860* (Urbana, Il.: University of Illinois Press, 1937). His description is much unlike harsher accounts of the post-war period such as those found in Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 126-148; and C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1951), 180-184. Thomas S. Stribling's novel, *The Store* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1932) depicts storekeepers as an economic group that dominated the Southern communities through power based on the crop-lien system.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas D. Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows, The Southern Country Store* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1944), 34, 36, 42, 47.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

store was no exception and the ledger attests to the volume, diversity, and scope of the store's stock. This wide range of merchandise was owing to the rural nature of most country stores and to the fact that a particular store might be the sole source of commercial activity for customers who might buy "a little of everything." Yet the stock seemed scanty to visitors from the North because they failed to realize that customers were more interested in the accessibility of a wide range of items than in a wide choice of quality in a particular field.<sup>10</sup> Where towns developed, the "general" store usually gave way to specialization, such as shoemakers, grocers, and hardware dealers;<sup>11</sup> Fairfield probably did not draw a sufficient volume of trade to warrant such specialized establishments, thus Jones' store remained a "general" one.

It is also likely that Jones' store paralleled closely the majority of country stores in its social aspects. Stores served as social gathering places for rural communities where neighbors met, news was swapped, and many checkerboards were worn thin. Usually they were polling places in rural areas, providing further opportunity for a dispersed population to meet socially. The country store has been termed a community clearinghouse playing a part in all facets of rural life.<sup>12</sup> Because there were few local banks some stores assumed many banking functions and kept farmers' money for safekeeping, as well as extending cash credit for taxes, doctor bills, and the like.<sup>13</sup> Again the Jones store was no exception and the ledger records that no less than 68 people, out of 126 accounts, borrowed cash from Jones during 1873, ranging from \$.10 to \$337.87 and totaling \$4,605.76. Moreover, the loans recorded in the ledger were probably not all the loans extended by Jones during the year, for many storekeepers made arrangements orally with seldom a record made of them; the country store business was always a highly personalized one.<sup>14</sup>

Extending credit was nothing new to rural storekeepers

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 167-169.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 70; Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, ii, 65.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas D. Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System in Southern Agriculture since 1865," *Journal of Southern History*, XII (February 1946), 25; Clark, *Pills Petticoats and Plows*, ii; Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 54.

<sup>14</sup>Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 33.

and the country store was an important element in the Southern economy long before and for many years after the Civil War. The rural storekeeper acted as middleman in the trade process between large wholesalers, located in business centers, and local farmers. The storekeeper purchased goods on long-term credit from wholesalers and, in turn, extended credit (up to 14 or 15 months) to farmers, which allowed the latter to harvest crops before meeting store bills.<sup>15</sup> Few farmers were able to buy regularly on a cash basis and credit was an absolute necessity for most. Approximately 78% of the typical country store's trade was credit business,<sup>16</sup> and though the exact number of customers served by Jones' store is not known, the 126 credit accounts almost certainly represent the majority of the store's business. Many storekeepers calculated an annual loss of 20% on credit sales through nonpayment, and not infrequently debtors escaped their debts by moving without having "paid-up" at the store.<sup>17</sup> The Jones store was not immune to debt evasion and at the end of one account column was scrawled over the balance "Deadhead," with no debit balance carried to 1874 and no record of payment.

There were ways of paying one's debt at the store, however, other than in cash. Oftentimes if a person was unable to settle a year's bill he could perform labor services for the merchant in order to balance the account.<sup>18</sup> Three of Jones' customers "worked out" their debts in this manner. Storekeepers also bartered store goods for cotton and other farm crops and not a few merchants bought cotton outright for speculation purposes.<sup>19</sup> The Jones ledger records many instances in which bacon, corn, eggs, and cotton were accepted as full or partial payment of debts. Jones received 18 bales of cotton during 1873 and allowed a credit of \$66.00 per bale. This acceptance of farm produce in payment was not only a near

<sup>15</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 14.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 53, states the figure at between 66% and 75% for the antebellum period; Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 313, states the figure at 90%; and Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 26, quotes 80%. The 78% quoted here is the means of the low of 66% and the high of 90%.

<sup>17</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 53-54; Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 93.

<sup>18</sup>Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 39.

<sup>19</sup>Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), 76; Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 14-15.



necessity for farmers, it also tended to bind the farmer to a particular merchant and thereby lessen the latter's competition with other stores.<sup>20</sup> It is not known to what extent Jones was involved in the crop-lien system, whereby farmers pledged crops as collateral for supplies, but many of his customers were freed slaves who were likely to have been bound by a lien in 1873.<sup>21</sup>

Aside from being indispensable to the farmer, the credit business paid profitable dividends to the merchant. Retail markup on goods ranged between 100% and 200% both before and after the Civil War.<sup>22</sup> Added to this heavy markup was a two-price system whereby prices were raised on supplies advanced on the credit basis; this credit markup ranged between 25% and 70% of the retail price.<sup>23</sup> Further, some storekeepers added an interest charge to credit accounts at the end of the year, which varied from 8% to 110% of the combined retail and credit prices. Interest rates were usually based on 12 months when they actually applied to a period of no longer than seven or eight months, because goods bought in December were charged interest for the entire year just as those bought in January.<sup>24</sup> Retail and credit markup for the Jones store is not known but it is doubtful, judging from the prices recorded in the ledger, that Jones raised prices to the extremes mentioned above. Moreover, Jones adhered to the antebellum practice concerning interest, whereby customers were not required to pay interest on accounts which were settled within the year.<sup>25</sup> Instead he charged interest at the annual rate of 10% only on the amount carried over to 1874, a total of \$511.01

<sup>20</sup>Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 127; Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 51.

<sup>21</sup>Out of 126 names in the account ledger 71 resided in Fairfield precinct, 44 were black and only one black owned any real estate; 27 were white. 9th Census, Pickens County, Population. The remaining 56 people probably lived either up or down the Tombigbee, visiting Fairfield often enough to carry an account at the store, or in Mississippi, a relatively short distance from Fairfield and the river.

<sup>22</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 122, 170; Woodman, *King Cotton*, 304; Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 207.

<sup>23</sup>Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 79, 207, 316; Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 28; Woodman, *King Cotton*, 80, 303; Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 130.

<sup>24</sup>Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 79, 316; Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 31; Woodman, *King Cotton*, 303; Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 130.

<sup>25</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 120.

for the year 1873.

Except for the Panic of 1873, Jones would have reaped a considerable profit during the year, even if his retail and credit markups and interest charges had been minimal. Importantly, Jones' store generated more business than the average general store in the postbellum period. It has been estimated that most post-Civil War accounts ranged between \$80.00 and \$150.00;<sup>26</sup> during 1873 Jones charged a total of \$20,162.95, an average of \$160.02 per credit account. His ledger also records total cash sales per day, which amounted to only \$2,070.67 for the entire year 1873. If Jones charged only minimum credit and retail markups, 25% and 100% respectively, a projection of his gross profit for 1873 can be obtained by subtracting these amounts from the total charge and cash business (where applicable), in order to establish wholesale cost, and then by adding markup and interest amounts together (see Table I).

Table I

Projection of Gross Profit of John C. H. Jones'  
General Store, 1873

Total credit sales	\$20,162.95
minus Credit markup of 25%	4,032.59
Credit sales minus credit markup	<u>\$16,130.36</u>
Credit sales minus credit markup	\$16,130.36
minus Retail markup of 100%	8,065.18
Wholesale cost of credit sales	= <u>8,065.18</u>
Total cash sales	\$ 2,070.67
minus Retail markup of 100%	1,035.33
Wholesale cost of cash sales	= <u>1,035.34</u>
Wholesale cost of credit sales	\$ 8,065.18
plus Wholesale cost of cash sales	1,035.34
Total wholesale cost	= <u>9,100.52</u>

<sup>26</sup>Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 137; Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System," 28.

Total credit and cash sales	\$22,133.62
minus Total wholesale cost	9,100.52
Gross profit from sales	= 13,033.10
Gross profit from sales	\$13,033.10
plus Interest charged in 1873	511.01
Projected gross profit for 1873	= 13,544.11

Subtracting a credit markup of 25% from the total credit charges leaves a remainder of \$16,130.36. Subtracting a retail markup of 100% from the latter figure yields a wholesale figure of \$8,065.18. Then, subtracting the retail markup of 100% on cash sales leaves a wholesale figure of \$1,035.34. Adding the wholesale figures, we find that Jones paid \$9,100.52 for goods sold during the year. When the total wholesale cost is subtracted from Jones' total cash and credit sales and the interest charges of \$511.01 are added to the remainder we find that the store realizes a gross, "on-paper," profit of \$13,544.11.

Net profit, of course, would take into consideration any unpaid balances carried over to 1874, transportation and insurance costs, and any other overhead expenses such as a clerk's salary, evaded debts, and the like. As it happened, possibly owing to the collapse of Jay Cooke's bank and the panic that gripped the nation in the fall of 1873, specie was in extremely short supply and Jones was forced to "carry" many accounts to 1874 either unpaid or only partially so. Only 35 of his customers had a beginning debit balance in January, 1873, averaging \$83.06 per account. Jones carried 82 accounts to 1874, however, averaging \$124.42 per account. Therefore, whereas Jones carried only \$2,872.10 to 1873 he was forced to carry \$10,202.44 to 1874, a difference of \$7,330.34. This factor alone infringed deeply into Jones' real profits. Although transportation and insurance costs and a clerk's salary were probably not confiscatory they further reduced Jones' real profit.<sup>27</sup> Presumably, Jones re-sold the cotton which he accepted as payment on accounts, but other produce, worked-out debts, and the

<sup>27</sup>Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 153-154. The 1870 census lists four people under the occupation of clerk in Fairfield precinct and the 1880 census lists two clerks in the "Village of Fairfield." It is likely that one of these people was in Jones' employ.

"Deadhead" account of \$26.00 reduced actual money profit even more. Consequently, it is impossible to compute Jones' net specie profit for 1873, but it is improbable that he realized more than \$2,000-\$2,500. Moreover, the depression lasted several years following 1873 and Jones' business probably suffered with the rest. Both before and after the panic and depression of the mid-1870s, however, many country merchants are known to have become wealthy;<sup>28</sup> and, had his customers paid their debts, Jones would have profited tremendously from his country store operation.

The ledger not only reveals facts relating to financial matters but social ones as well. One of the most frequently purchased items at the store was whiskey. Its credit price was \$.50 per quart early in 1873 and rose to \$.60 per quart in July, though odd amounts were charged at times.<sup>29</sup> Aside from any cash sales, which are not itemized in the ledger, whiskey charges during the year total \$1,073.05 — 1,951 quarts at an average of \$.55 per quart. Only 22 customers bought no whiskey, thus the average liquor consumption of the 104 who used it was 18.76 quarts each per year. Considering that some accounts represent families containing many members the amount of liquor consumed does not seem overly intemperant, though the liquor trade was always under attack by reformers.<sup>30</sup>

Other prevalent items charged included tobacco, sugar, and coffee. Tobacco was sold in plugs (at \$.25 per plug), as smoking tobacco (at \$.15 per sack), and as snuff (at \$.50 per box). During the year 87 people purchased a total of \$706.38 in some form of tobacco. Sugar was charged at \$.15 to \$.20 per pound and 60 people purchased 2,181 pounds costing \$381.68 during the year. Only 40 people purchased coffee, which was charged at \$.30 per pound throughout the year, for a total of \$163.90.

Perhaps the item most reflective of the customers' diet and their dilemma was bacon. Only 48 people purchased bacon during 1873 for a total of \$3,250.64. Bacon was charged at

<sup>28</sup>Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 331; Atherton, *The Southern Country Store*, 21-25.

<sup>29</sup>Prices quoted are assumed to reflect both retail and credit markups.

<sup>30</sup>Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 43.

\$.19 per pound, meaning that each of the 48 people who bought bacon purchased an average of 356.42 pounds each — enough for approximately one pound per day. The author of the standard work on postbellum country stores has written that this meat was “euphemistically called ‘bacon,’” however, and was likely “white” or “fat” salt pork obtained from pen-fed hogs, which were slaughtered and shipped south by railroad — not the lean pork to which most Southerners were formerly accustomed.<sup>31</sup> This fact comments on the lack of postbellum self-sufficiency and to devastation of the huge droves of hogs that roamed the open ranges of the South before the Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

Flour, molasses, and cooking oil combined with bacon to form what was called the “white diet,” and Southerners consumed these goods with monotonous regularity.<sup>33</sup> Jones charged a total of \$608.65 for flour in 1873, at \$14.00 per barrel or 2 “scoops” for \$.25. He also sold 303 gallons of molasses on credit at \$1.00 per gallon, as well as 334 gallons of cooking oil at \$.75 per gallon. Jones sold a wide variety of other foods in smaller amounts including crackers, oysters, sardines, salmons, cheese, and, especially during the Christmas season, apples, oranges, raisins, and candy. The total charged for food in 1873 was \$5,191.24 and the figure would doubtless be larger if cash sales were known. On the whole it seems that none of Jones’ customers was completely self-sufficient concerning food, nor were they completely dependent. For some who bought bacon and molasses purchased no flour and cooking oil and vice versa. The fact that Jones sold such a tremendous volume of basic foods, however, does reflect the decline in self-sufficiency after the Civil War.<sup>34</sup>

Jones’ largest sales were in dry goods and hardware, a

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 80, 157, 263; Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake, Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1880* (Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 252.

<sup>32</sup>Grady McWhiney, “The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture,” *Alabama Review* XXXI (January 1978), 7. For a more detailed treatment of this topic see Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, “The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation,” *Journal of Southern History*, XLI (May 1975), 147-166.

<sup>33</sup>Clark, *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, 79, 80, 263.

<sup>34</sup>McWhiney, “The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture,” 3-32, *passim*.



total charge of \$8,527.83. He sold cloth of many kinds and all manner of sewing paraphernalia, ready-made clothes and shoes, building materials, farming equipment, guns and powder, books, knives and forks, and various other items too numerous to name here. The stock seemed to anticipate the customers' every need.

John C. H. Jones operated a reasonably typical country store in 1873. His range of stock substantially supplied his customers' needs and desires, and personal loans were granted with regularity. The store was also conventional in its personal and casual style of business, allowing customers to "work-out" debts or pay with farm produce. Although the store's exact profit markups are not known, Jones could have expected a comfortable return on his investment had his customers been able to settle their accounts; this also would have been ordinary. The store's customers also adhered roughly to the norm. Preponderantly black, with a contingent of freed slaves, the customers bought as much in consequence of inclination and desire as from need. The store supplied its service area with the almost-universal Southern diet and in some small way compensated for the postbellum dedication to cotton. In all these ways the store was conventional, orthodox, and typical. As one studies the pages, names, and numbers in the ledger, however, he tends to become somewhat acquainted with Jones and his clientele, acquiring a feeling for each, and making this particular store seem rather special.

## BETWEEN TWO WARS: ALABAMA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE 1849-1861

by

Robert C. McGregor

During the fifteen years intervening between America's war with Mexico and its own civil war, the national partisan coalitions of the Jackson period were to a large degree displaced by sectional loyalties. The vast cession from Mexico catalysed a significant Northern opposition to the extension of slavery into newly occupied territories. This, coupled with the general anti-slavery agitation carried on since the 1820's, became the prime focus of national attention. The traditional Jacksonian issues slipped into the background.<sup>1</sup>

The mounting pressure against the slave system that formed the basis of the Southern economy encouraged Southern radicalism as the followers of John C. Calhoun saw a supreme opportunity to advance the Southern Rights program they had so long advocated. Since the Nullification Crisis of 1832, Calhoun had been attempting to persuade Southern leaders to forego national politics in favor of sectional unity. As the South's minority status became more pronounced with the passage of time, Calhoun and his followers became more desperate, and therefore more radical, in their views. By 1849, they were calling for national guarantees of non-interference with slavery where it already existed, and non-resistance to its extension into the territories. Since slavery was a totally Southern concern, the radicals believed that the national party system could not be relied upon to accomplish these objectives. For this reason, sectional unity was all the more imperative.<sup>2</sup>

Alabama was one of the first Southern states to lend significant support to Calhoun's cause. Led by such radicals as Dixon H. Lewis and William L. Yancey, many of Alabama's leaders joined a campaign for Southern unity that would eschew national parties.<sup>3</sup> The Alabama support was important, as the

<sup>1</sup>Joel H. Silbey, *The Shrine of Party* (Pittsburgh, 1967), 83-87.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 98-106 and 137-141.

<sup>3</sup>William G. Brown, *A History of Alabama* (New York, 1903), 174.

state was located in the heart of the cotton South, in the midst of a black belt area dependent upon the slave economy. This central location made the state key to the concept of sectional unity.

Although a few significant Alabamians were in the vanguard of Calhoun's followers, this was by no means an indication that they represented a united opinion in their home state, much less throughout the remainder of the South. In 1848, the radicals could not command a majority of the state's voters for their platform.<sup>4</sup> Opposition was rugged, and despite the fact that it came from two directions, it represented a single concept: the continued ascendancy of national politics over sectionalism. Divided on many issues, Whigs and conservative Democrats were yet able to agree on the importance of maintaining truly national parties. Efforts of the radicals to overcome this national party loyalty played a very large role in Alabama politics between 1848 and 1861.

Opposition to the Calhoun program was sectional as well as politically partisan in Alabama. The state could be split into five relatively homogenous divisions, dictated primarily by geography.<sup>5</sup> Southernmost of these was a river valley area including some ten counties. The land in this region was not as arable as that of the Black Belt, and slavery was not prevalent. Nonetheless, the economy of the area was largely dependent upon the slave system because its chief population center, Mobile, was an important export city for the cotton trade. Generally, this area's lone Congressman joined with the Black Belt radicals, although there were some significant exceptions.

The Black Belt itself made up portions of three Congressional districts. Slaves in this region outnumbered whites two to one; most of them employed in the production of cotton and similar cash crops. Southern Rights activity was centered in this area, and the movement enjoyed a considerable degree

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<sup>4</sup>The Alabama State Democratic Convention endorsed a radical platform early in 1848, but the party ultimately supported Lewis Cass, who ran on a "squatter sovereignty" platform. Cass carried Alabama's nine electoral votes. *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>5</sup>For further examples of intrastate sectional differences, see Frank L. Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Chicago, 1949), 150-229.

of success in two of the three districts. District Four, located in the east-central portion of the state, included a scrub forest region known as the Pine Belt. Though none of its own citizens was ever elected to Congress, the voters of this essentially conservative region were numerous enough to defeat radical attempts to control the district several times during the 40's and early 50's.

At a line drawn roughly halfway up the state, the Black Belt gives way to the mountainous Appalachian region. There, slave-holding was relatively insignificant, and the economy was geared in a different direction. Grains and dairy produce were the principal products, and these were marketed, if at all, in the direction of Tennessee, not Mobile. The Appalachian people were staunchly unionist, a sentiment usually well reflected by the one or two men they sent to Congress.

Northernmost of Alabama's geoeconomic sections was the Tennessee Valley. Like the Appalachians, the Valley was not truly a part of the King Cotton economy. There were a great many slaves (45% of the population), but their production went north, rather than south. Because the people with whom they traded were generally cool toward the Southern Rights philosophy, the Valley people tended to be conservative as well. George S. Houston, foremost of Alabama's union men, was the perennial Representative from this region.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of power politics, Alabama's sectional split could be reduced to two major areas, with the southern rim of the Appalachians the dividing line. Often the antipathies between these two sections were quite strong, and it was not unusual for the leaders of one section to oppose an issue merely because those of the other were in favor.<sup>7</sup> The effect of this intra-state rivalry was at times observed in the behavior of the state's representatives in the House of Representatives.

Under the republican design of the Constitution, the members of the House were to be the representatives of all the people of each state. But what did this mean philosophically?

<sup>6</sup>For further geographic analysis of the state, see Brown, *History of Alabama*, i-xii.

<sup>7</sup>Roy Franklin Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy* (New York, 1948), 254.

Certainly not all the classes and interests of the people could be embodied in a few national representatives, a fact Hamilton ably pointed out in *The Federalist*.<sup>8</sup> Nor was this to be desired, in fact. Jefferson spoke of a national elite among men, one that would be evidenced in those elected to Congress.<sup>9</sup> Representatives were not to be of the people, but rather the best of the people. Emanating from the best elements of society, this elected aristocracy would be well-equipped to maintain the pervasive interests of their constituents. It was to be expected that most Representatives would be of the learned, landowning, and commercial classes. This, at least, was the theory.<sup>10</sup> In Alabama between 1849 and 1861, representation differed somewhat from the ideal, although in some respects the theory held true.

The landed and professional classes of Alabama were best represented in the national legislature. Of the twenty-one men sent to Congress, all but two were lawyers, one of them a doctor. Several of these professional men owned farms as well, thereby insuring that the livelihood of most Alabamians was well represented.<sup>11</sup>

Slaveholding was often the measure of a man's status in Alabama, and many of the state's Representatives were among the elite. Three-fifths of Alabama's total families owned no slaves at all, while only about thirteen percent owned more than ten. Among the state's Representatives however, all but two were slaveholders, and over half owned more than ten.<sup>12</sup> As can be observed from the chart below, the percentage of Representatives owning slaves far outweighed the percentage in the population as a whole.

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<sup>8</sup>Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison, *The Federalist Papers* (New York, 1961), 214-215.

<sup>9</sup>Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men who made it* (New York, 1948), 27-32.

<sup>10</sup>Hamilton, *The Federalist*, 214-215.

<sup>11</sup>All biographical information concerning Congressmen, save for slaveholding data, is derived from the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1971* (Washington: 1971).

<sup>12</sup>Slaveholding data concerning the general population of Alabama is derived from J. D. B. DeBow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, 1854), 95 and 99, hereafter cited as *Compendium*.



Slaveholding in Alabama:<sup>13</sup>  
1850

		Total Families		Representatives	
		Number	%	Number	%
Number	0	44491	60.3%	2	10%
of	1-4	12941	17.5%	3	15%
Slaves	5-9	6752	8.9%	4	20%
Owned:	10-19	5067	6.9%	5	25%
	20-99	4481	6.1%	6	30%
	100-?	234	0.3%	0	0%
Total:		73786	100.0%	20	100%
Total Slaveholders:		29295	39.7%	18	90%

Although most of the larger slaveholders (those owning ten or more) made their homes in the Black Belt, they were not confined to that area alone. All but one of the Representatives owning fewer than five slaves came from the Appalachians, a region of few slaves. To this degree, Representatives reflected the slaveholding status of their constituencies.

Education also set Alabama's Representatives apart from their electors. The state had a larger stake in mass education than most of the Lower South, but the system was nonetheless inadequate. Only a fraction of Alabama's young were reached by the meager public school system. Most were taught either at home or in sub-standard, local schoolhouses. Education beyond the grammar school level was rare.<sup>14</sup> Among the Representatives, however, higher levels of educational attainment were more common. Two-thirds attended college, nine of these graduating. Only four of twenty-one known failed to go beyond the public or local school level.

The men who represented Alabama during the stormy years prior to the Civil War were primarily of an elitist set if the factors of profession, slaveholding, and education are any indication. With very few exceptions, the Congressmen achieved

<sup>13</sup>Slaveholding data concerning Congressmen from National Archives, *Slave Schedules, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington: 1850).

<sup>14</sup>DeBow, *Compendium*, 141-153.

heights in these three areas that most of their fellows could only wish for. The people of Alabama chose as their Representatives men a cut above the norms of their society. Yet, these Representatives had to reflect the views of those who elected them, or risk the loss of their seats. The men chosen were men of ability, but they spoke to the great national issues in a manner calculated to retain the support of their constituencies. How the people at home saw the issues depended to a great degree upon local circumstance.

Since the state's entry into the Union in 1819, Alabama had been overwhelmingly Democratic in its politics. The Democratic candidate won the state's electoral tally in every presidential election, and Alabama's senators were consistently Democrats.<sup>15</sup> Basically, this was because the Democratic creed best represented the needs of Alabama's people. Staple agriculture was the occupation of most Alabamians, who felt that a low tariff policy was essential to foster the foreign trade this livelihood made desirable. To insure that the tariffs were kept low, government expenditures had to be limited as well. This meant opposition to federal aid for internal improvements. To further secure federal revenues, some Alabamians also advocated high prices for the public lands, although this was an issue of much contention throughout the state.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the desire for low tariffs and limited federal spending attracted most of the state's voters to the Democracy. Henry Clay's American System won few disciples. The Democrats were overwhelmingly successful in the Congressional races in the northern half of the state prior to 1849, and usually managed to win most of the southern districts as well. Successful Whig candidates from the Mobile and Black Belt-Pine Belt districts proved by their voting records to be of the "States' Rights" variety, moderately opposed to much of the nationalist Whig program.<sup>17</sup> Most often, these Whigs won election because they offered an alternative to the Southern Rights Democrats gaining strength in the southern half of the state.

<sup>15</sup>All election information is from the "Candidate Name List" provided by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

<sup>16</sup>Silbey, *Shrine of Party*, pp. 83-87.

<sup>17</sup>Note the behavior of the Alabama Whigs during the 1840's. *Ibid.*, 155-212.

Personality played a significant role in Alabama politics. Dynamism and oratorical ability were virtual musts for the prospective Congressman, and stump campaigns were gala occasions held throughout the state every election year. By 1849, four individuals stood above the rest as masters of the political art, though each possessed his own style and his own set of opinions.

Henry W. Hilliard of Montgomery County held the distinction of being the state's foremost Whig. Hilliard made his reputation as opposition leader in the state legislature, and in 1845 was rewarded for his efforts with the first of three elections to Congress. Intellectual and restrained, Hilliard was considered an elegant and resourceful orator, qualities necessary to a man advocating a politics alien to most of his constituency. Caught between his loyalties to national Whig policies and his desire to be re-elected, he often had to walk a difficult tight-rope. During his four years in Congress prior to 1849, Hilliard proved a moderate on tariff and expansion issues, while opposing internal improvements as much as any Southern Democrat. Only in opposition to the Mexican War did he completely coincide with the nationalists of his party.<sup>18</sup>

Hilliard's chief competitor in southern Alabama was William L. Yancey, an avowed Southern Rights man. He was also from Montgomery. Yancey's political journey had been a strange one. His original claim to notoriety came as a result of his campaign against the Nullifiers of his native South Carolina.<sup>19</sup> Moving to Alabama in 1836, Yancey took up farming and journalism, and began to view matters differently. Continued anti-slavery agitation upset him greatly, and by the 1840's Yancey was a thorough-going Southern radical. His stump debates with Hilliard were thus true contests of opposing ideology, with Yancey confronting his opponent's intellectual style with more simple, direct arguments. Both were spell-binding orators, and it was not unusual for their debates to last an entire afternoon, always with good attendance. Yancey's actual tenure in Congress was brief — not quite two years —

<sup>18</sup>Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record, and Public Men from 1540 to 1872* (Tuscaloosa, 1964), 454-455; hereafter cited as *Alabama*.

<sup>19</sup>Austin L. Venable, "William L. Yancey's Transition from Unionism to State Rights," *The Journal of Southern History*, X (April, 1944), 331-342.

but he was nonetheless the leading power in the Alabama Southern Rights movement. Often he was instrumental in the election of other radicals to Congress, while he himself held out for the Senate seat he never received. Yancey was the agitator, always seeking to advance the Calhoun philosophy in his home state.<sup>20</sup>

North of the Black Belt, the requirements of politics were somewhat different. Appalachian people were generally poorer and simpler than their southernly neighbors, and hence responded to different conceptual views. Foremost in capturing the heart of the mountain folk was Williamson R. W. Cobb, prototype of the political demagogue. Cobb, a clock pedler turned farmer-politician, was an exception to the rule that Alabamians elected their betters. He owned no slaves, had a very limited education, and spoke to his constituency in a manner designed to win both hearts and votes. Usually he ended his speeches with crowd-pleasing songs of his own composition, one of the most popular of which began "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm!" In Congress, Cobb voted against internal improvements, in favor of the Mexican War and slavery, and opposed his fellow Alabama Representatives by campaigning for a homestead bill. At home, Cobb soundly defeated any candidate who chanced to run against him between 1847 and 1861.<sup>21</sup>

In the Tennessee Valley, the acknowledged leader in politics was George S. Houston, archtype of the Southern gentleman and a loyal Jacksonian Democrat. Well respected by his Congressional colleagues because of his chivalrous and mild-spoken manner, Houston was able to secure re-election with little difficulty between 1841 and 1849, when he retired temporarily. He shared with his constituents a love for the Union, an opposition to high tariffs and government spending, and an ambivalence over the war with Mexico. Houston's voice was one of the strongest of many from northern Alabama in resistance to the Southern Rights philosophy gaining strength in the Black Belt. In Congress, Houston did as much as he could

<sup>20</sup>John W. Dubose, *The Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey* (New York, 1942); hereafter cited as *Life of Yancey*.

<sup>21</sup>Lucille Griffith, *Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900* (University, Alabama, 1968), 335-336; hereafter cited as *Alabama*.

to quell the growing disaffection between North and South, an effort that won him respect and approval both at home and in the House of Representatives.<sup>22</sup>

The combination of events that culminated in the acquisition of Texas, New Mexico, and California — mostly potential slave territory — served to augment the growing sectional dissension of the 1840's. Abolitionists, convinced that a slave-holding conspiracy was designing to enhance its power, reacted with the Wilmot Proviso, coupled with intensified anti-slavery agitation. Southern defense of their institution was quick.<sup>23</sup>

At a caucus of Southern Congressional representatives held in January, 1849, Calhoun attempted to gain adoption of a resolution enumerating the consequences he felt would attend continued Northern agitation. Although caucus moderates substituted for Calhoun's dark visions a more conservative document, the threat was obvious: Congress must protect slaveholding rights in the territories or dire consequences would follow.<sup>24</sup> Yancey had attempted to graft similar sentiments onto the Democratic Platform of 1848, only to fail. The Southern radicals had nonetheless served notice that their philosophy had found renewed strength in the face of problems growing out of the Mexican Cession.

Alabama's position on the new national problems of 1848 was somewhat anomalous. In an initial flush of outraged enthusiasm, the state Democratic Convention had in January adopted Yancey's famed "Alabama Platform" calling for equal rights in the territories. Further, the Convention ordered its delegates to bolt the National Convention if their platform was not accepted.<sup>25</sup> The Alabama state legislature immediately endorsed the platform, as did the Democrats of Georgia, Florida, and Virginia. Even Calhoun recognized that Alabama was now leading the drive for Southern rights.

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<sup>22</sup>Brewer, *Alabama*, 202.

<sup>23</sup>For an analysis of the supposed cabal, see Frederick Merk, *Slavery and the Annexation of Texas* (New York, 1972).

<sup>24</sup>Margaret Coit, *John C. Calhoun: American Portrait* (Boston, 1950), 475-76.

<sup>25</sup>Brown, *History of Alabama*, 202.



By the time the National Convention met at Baltimore however, the conservative, northern wing of the Alabama Democracy had dampened the ardor of the state's delegation. When the Convention adopted a non-committal plank on the territorial question, most of the Alabama members acquiesced. Yancey's walk out of the Convention was lonely.<sup>26</sup>

The conservatives in Alabama politics further manifested their opposition to the Calhounists during the Southern caucus of early 1849. Even the moderate substitution for Calhoun's original resolution failed to win the support of important Alabama politicians. Cobb, Hilliard, and Houston refused to sign. Cobb later observed, ". . . though I have been reproved for refusing to sign such a southern address, . . . and by some denounced as not being true to the South — notwithstanding all this, I *would not submit*."<sup>27</sup>

Despite such evidence of strong conservative opposition, the Southern Rights men were in a powerful position for the Congressional elections of 1849. Houston sensed the political climate and refused to stand for re-election. His replacement was an avowed Southern Rights man, David Hubbard. In all, the radicals won four districts out of seven in 1849. Significantly, two of these victories were north of the Black Belt. Conservatism seemed on the wane.<sup>28</sup>

The radicals were not to have their way in the Thirty-first Congress (1849-51). The efforts of Henry Clay and Stephen A. Douglas led to the passage of one last compromise between the two great sections. Conciliators North and South trusted that the Compromise of 1850, embodying the principle of squatter sovereignty, would neutralize the sectional tensions without adoption of the extreme measures of the now late John C. Calhoun.

Radicals throughout the lower South were not appeased by the Compromise. They had desired Constitutional guarantees for the protection of slavery and their sectional power.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>27</sup>31st Congress, 1st Sess., *Congressional Globe* X94: 647.

<sup>28</sup>"Candidate Name List," ICPR.

<sup>29</sup>J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, (Boston, 1953), 116-118; hereafter cited as *The Civil War*.

If these were to prove unobtainable, a peaceable dissolution of the Union was preferred. The Southern Rights men believed the Compromise to be essentially synonymous with the Wilmot Proviso. ". . . the Wilmot," stated David Hubbard, ". . . is a plain direct proposition to exclude the southern people, by law, from carrying their property and enjoying its use upon territory to which they have an equal right with the people of the North."<sup>30</sup> The Compromise was to be opposed at all costs.

All seven of Alabama's Representatives took a clear stand on the Compromise. The four Southern Rights sympathizers voted completely against it, while the two Whigs were joined by Williamson Cobb in strong support of its passage. As far as the Alabama Congressional elections of 1851 were concerned, the question was one of black and white. One was either pro-compromise or anti-compromise.<sup>31</sup>

The Congressional election of 1851 was one of the most memorable in Alabama history. At the outset, three political factions entered the field in most districts, thereby promising interesting triangular races. The Whigs, led by Henry Hilliard, saw in the Democratic split an excellent opportunity for their party to become the ruling force in Alabama for the first time. Squarely on the side of the Compromise, several Whigs added the adjective "Union" to their party label, thus branding their opponents secessionists by inference.

In the Democratic camp, the conservative wing held the advantage. Leaders of the state's Democratic machine were Senators William R. King and Jeremiah Clemens, both longtime foes of Yancey and the radicals. This conservative machine was strongest in the northern part of the state where the voters had been casting straight Democratic returns since Andrew Jackson's time. The preponderance of Democrats in this area assured the machine control of the governorship and the state legislature.<sup>32</sup> In the south however, machine control of the party was tenuous due to the inroads of Southern Rights.

<sup>30</sup>31st Congress, 1st Sess., *Congressional Globe* X95: 947.

<sup>31</sup>Henry Mayer, "A Leaven of Disunion: The Growth of the Secessionist Faction in Alabama 1847-1851," *The Alabama Review*, XXII (April, 1969), 83-116.

<sup>32</sup>Brown, *History of Alabama*, 177-205.

The machine would have difficulty maintaining discipline in the south with a stand in favor of the Compromise of 1850. With the conservatives in control of the regular party machinery, the radicals had resolved to present their own slate of candidates, running under the name of States' Rights Democrats.<sup>33</sup>

Almost as soon as the campaign began, the Whigs and conservative Democrats recognized their common ground in this special contest, resulting in the eventual agreement upon compromise candidates. In Districts Five and Six, (Tennessee Valley and one of the Appalachian Districts) Union Democrats were put up, namely George S. Houston and Williamson Cobb. Cobb was considered a sure bet in his district, but the Tennessee Valley would be perhaps the most significant of the seven contests. Houston, the classic conservative, was running against David Hubbard, incumbent and avowed secessionist. In the other northern district, Alexander White ran as a Union Whig.

In southern Alabama, where the conservative faction of the Democracy had been losing ground to the radicals for years, more reliance was placed upon the Whig organization. Hilliard himself refused to stand for a fourth term, but campaigned diligently for the Union Whig candidates. James Abercrombie and W. S. Mudd carried the Whig standard in Districts Two and Three, while William R. Smith was brought forward as a simple "Unionist" in the Fourth. The Whigs also ran a Union candidate in the First District, though without the help of conservative Democrats.

As usual, the Mobile District provided a unique political case. John Bragg, a long-admired public citizen, was put forth as a compromise between the radical and conservative wings of the Democracy. Bragg played his part well, contending that secession was a legal remedy for Southern ills but not one to be implemented at the present time. In the other six districts, the Union candidates held that secession, if legal at all, would be economically disastrous and that the only way to save the South was through acceptance of the just compromise legislated by Congress. They did emphasize, how-

<sup>33</sup>Mayer, "Leaven of Disunion," 83-90.

ever, that success of the Compromise hinged upon strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law."<sup>34</sup>

The radicals ran a candidate of their own in every district save the First. Two of these, Hubbard and Sampson W. Harris, were incumbents, while the others were well-known figures in the state's government. Yancey again refused to run, but campaigned vigorously for the Southern Rights men, usually in debates with Hilliard. The public discussions between these two often overshadowed the efforts of the men actually running for office. In the debates with Hilliard, Yancey's position was always the same. The South must elect to Congress men committed to its interests; compromises were not to be relied upon; slave-holding rights were to be guaranteed in the territories. Other radical candidates painted terrifying pictures of the slave rebellion to attend further Northern agitation, and urged secession as the surest means of salvation.<sup>35</sup>

In August, after all the arguments on both sides of the Compromise issue were presented, the people voted. The result was close but decisive. Alabama would accept the Compromise and remain in the Union. Harris, the incumbent from the Third District, was the only radical victor; he won by 582 votes (6.2%). The Union Whigs took two districts — including one they had never won before<sup>36</sup> — and Unionist Smith won election as well. Cobb, as expected, did extremely well as a Union Democrat, and, most important of all, Houston defeated Hubbard in the Tennessee Valley. Bragg, the consensus candidate of all the Democrats in the Mobile district, defeated a Union Whig to round out the slate. Conservatism reigned.

Although the radicals managed to win only one district, their results were not totally disheartening. Only in Cobb's district had the loss been overwhelming. In most districts, it had taken an unholy coalition of Whigs and conservative Democrats to defeat the radical candidates. In the face of a compromise that had seemingly placated much of the nation, Alabama's radicals had won a large percentage of the vote

<sup>34</sup>Brewer, *Alabama*, 409-410.

<sup>35</sup>Dubose, *Life of Yancey*, 185-193.

<sup>36</sup>It was, in fact, the first, last, and only Whig victory in the Appalachian area.

for their stance in opposition. They had lost most of the Congressional races, but their position in the state's politics was by no means destroyed. The defeat was not one that could be overcome, given a little more time and work. The radicals learned one lesson from their narrow defeat. Rather than oppose the party machine that had so long controlled politics in their state, they must gain control of it and direct it to meet their own needs. Power within the Democratic Party meant power in the state. For the next ten years, the radicals would battle the Union-sympathizing conservatives for that power. Alabama's loyalty to the Union hung in the balance.<sup>37</sup>

In comparison with the Congressional sessions of the previous six years, those of the Thirty-second Congress were fairly peaceful. It had not yet become apparent that wide-spread Northern opposition would severely hinder the effectiveness of the Fugitive Slave Law. The Compromise of 1850 seemed viable. The territorial disputes of the 1840's had been temporarily resolved, and agitation of the slave issue in Congress was kept to a minimum. The nation as a whole seemed to desire a respite from sectional ills. The Congress of 1851-53 devoted itself to the vagaries of American economic health, debating the questions of internal improvement, sale of the public lands, and federal aid to railroad construction. The troublesome issue of slave extension was left in the background.<sup>38</sup>

In the state of Alabama, the politics of Southernism also occupied the backseat for the time being. Like much of the nation, Alabama had contracted the railroad construction fever. Plans were being prepared for an expanded network of rails throughout the state, most of them contingent on some form of state or federal aid. The temperance issue served to detract from the Southern Rights question as well. For the moment, Yancey and his followers could find few sympathizers.<sup>39</sup>

With the Union question apparently settled, Alabama's Representatives were free to assert their positions on the economic issues that now held the nation's interests. Since

<sup>37</sup>Mayer, "Leaven of Disunion," 112-116.

<sup>38</sup>Silbey, *Shrine of Party*, 121-136

<sup>39</sup>Brown, *History of Alabama*, 211-212.



economics had played little part in the election of 1851, no pledges had been made on these issues. A certain degree of splintering was bound to result.

Sampson W. Harris, the only Southern Rights man to gain office, demonstrated an affinity with the conservative Democrats on most economic issues. With Harris, a majority of the Democrats favored a liberal land policy and federal aid to railroad construction while opposing organization of the Nebraska Territory. The two Union Whigs, Abercrombie and White, concurred with these stands. However, in John Bragg and William R. Smith, Alabama had two maverick Representatives. Both had been coalition candidates — Bragg a compromise between two Democratic factions, Smith the choice of rival Unionist groups. In Congress, both asserted a large degree of independence in voting. Bragg had enjoyed a long career of quiet individualism, and proved no different as a Representative. He took a moderate stand on railroad subsidy and the slavery question, and opposed the graduation of land prices. Bragg followed the traditional Southern pattern, voting to keep federal expenditures low and land revenues high. His colleagues, however, were voting with the West on the land issue in part to secure Western support on future sectional issues, in part to win votes from the yeomanry at home. Bragg was out of step with the times.

Unlike Bragg, who voted the dictates of a tradition-bound Democratic conscience, Willitam R. Smith demonstrated a diametric opposition to any previous voting position. Smith, like Cobb a non-slaveholder from the Appalachian region, was completely amenable to federal aid for internal improvements for both railroads and rivers and harbors. He also voted in favor of Nebraska's organization despite its obvious potential as a free state. These stands were not to be the last of Smith's deviations.

Overall, the voting pattern of Alabama's Representatives was relatively coherent despite the diffusive nature of the campaigns that elected them. In general, the Alabama delegation favored graduation of land prices, federal aid for railroads (but not for other forms of internal improvement), military pensions, and slavery. They opposed the organization of

Nebraska, a portent of the divisive sectional potential of that issue.

The voters apparently approved the stands of their Congressmen. All but two were returned in the elections of 1853. White and Bragg refused to stand for re-election, the latter due to disillusionment with the "evidence of a decadence of public virtue" prevalent in Washington.<sup>40</sup> Bragg's moderation on the slavery issue had made him a liability to the Southern Rights wing of the Democracy anyway.

As far as the prospects for Union sentiment were concerned, the electoral results of the year 1852-53 were ambivalent. The Unionists were strengthened by the election to the Vice-Presidency of William R. King, a Unionist Democrat from Alabama. In the state's Congressional Districts however, the indications were different. White and Bragg were replaced by Southern Rights men, both of whom ran with Democratic Party support. The radicals were again beginning to enjoy some success within the Democracy.

The Alabama delegation to the Thirty-third Congress appeared a disparate group. Two conservative Democrats had been elected, along with three Southern Rights men, one Union Whig, and one Unionist. From the party labels, it appeared that splintering within the group would be a common occurrence. Such was not the case.

Events beyond the control of Alabama's individual Congressmen conspired to unite them on virtually every issue they faced. Problems began when Senator Douglas of Illinois, pressed by home-state railroad interests and Western demands, dutifully reported a Kansas-Nebraska bill out of his territories committee in January, 1854. In the hope of mitigating the slavery question, Douglas had embodied the principal of "squatters sovereignty" in the legislation. The principal was a device that appealed practically no one.<sup>41</sup>

The consequent debate on the Nebraska-Kansas Bill was a long and painful experience in both Houses. Most Southerners,

<sup>40</sup>Brewer, *Alabama*, 409.

<sup>41</sup>Randall, *The Civil War*, 132-133.

particularly those with radical leanings, were indifferent to the bill itself. Although its provisions did unleash the possibility of further slave territory north of the Missouri Compromise line, the guarantees of slave extension were woefully inadequate. The radicals had long stood on a platform of positive protection for slaveholders in the territories. This bill was not what they desired. What forced Southerners into vigorous support for the legislation was not the bill, but rather the attacks upon it by Northern abolitionists. They demanded that slavery be banned absolutely from the territory as provided by the Compromise of 1820. Philip Phillips of Alabama observed that the bill was "... assailed by many who admitted the correctness of the principle upon which it was founded, and yet objected to it as a repeal of the Missouri Act of 1820." "If that act," he continued, "had no further claim upon their consideration than its own intrinsic merits, it surely would be illogical to say that the wrong of their predecessors should be a bar to righteous action on their own part."<sup>42</sup>

To a man, the Alabama Representatives supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act, thereby assisting its eventual passage. In addition, the seven Congressmen voted as a unit in opposition to internal improvements, conservative land policy, high tariffs, and payments for the claims of Texas creditors. On the surface, it appeared that Alabama's Representatives had at last found the common ground upon which to unite in defense of their section. Save for the support of liberal land policy, all seven had adopted a traditional Southern stance on the issues. All had defended low tariffs, slave extension, and minimal federal spending.

Home reaction to this high degree of Congressional unity was somewhat complicated by the advent of a new party in Alabama. Rather than basing a campaign on the issues fought in Congress, the House candidates found themselves debating the merits of a new political creed: Americanism.

In the wake of disastrous defeat in the presidential canvass of 1852, the national Whig Party had been severely weakened. Disintegration was completed when Northern Whigs

<sup>42</sup>33rd Congress, 1st Sess., *Congressional Globe* X105: 984.

deserted the party for a new, sectional, anti-slavery party formed in the wake of the Nebraska-Kansas debate. With the national Whig organization collapsed, Southern Whigs were forced into either the Democracy or the new American Party. The American organization, born of several near-paranoid fears, announced its intention "to cultivate an intense Americanism, and exclude aliens from suffrage, and Roman Catholics from office." Membership in this ritual-strewn organization was secret, but voters flocked to their standard by the thousands, all for no apparent reason. There were few immigrants living in Alabama at the time, and Catholicism had not been considered a threat prior to 1855.<sup>43</sup>

The Americans played upon the voters' fears and emotions rather than their intellect. By this practice they managed to elect two Representatives, one in the Mobile District. The other was William R. Smith, the maverick Unionist, who had now shifted allegiances. Smith's victory was especially significant for the Americans, as he had won in a three-way contest, with every newspaper in the District against him.<sup>44</sup>

The only other race of significance was in the Second District — Hilliard's home — where a Democrat was elected for the first time in ten years. The result was symbolic. The Whigs were finished as a force in Alabama politics. Their attempt to identify themselves as the party of Union had failed. The voters gravitated more naturally to the conservative Democrats, who not only bore the Union label but also espoused the economic doctrines the people desired. The death of the national Whig party had finished Alabama's Whiggery. With no national standard around which to rally, most of the party faithful joined the Americans as the only viable alternative to the Democrats.

Henry Hilliard, the leader of Alabama Whiggery, spent the next few years politically adrift, unable to support either Democrats or Americans. In the remaining four Congressional districts, incumbent Democrats won easy re-election. Five Democrats and two Americans would make up the new Alabama delegation. These results were difficult to analyze. The

<sup>43</sup>Griffith, *Alabama*, 343-348.

<sup>44</sup>Brewer, *Alabama*, 561.

Americans had won their districts at the expense of Southern Rights candidates, apparently indicating a defeat for radicalism. Yet, the Nebraska-Kansas Act had united the Alabama radicals and conservatives during the preceeding Congress, and five of these Alabamians were returning. It remained to be seen whether one side had co-opted the other.

While the Alabama Democracy struggled with their secretive Americanist opponents, events of a far more fearful nature were taking place in Kansas. Radicals on both sides of the slavery issue had quickly induced an artificial emigration to Kansas following passage of the Nebraska-Kansas Act, hoping to people the territory with enough voters to decide the state's slaveholding status. Clashes were inevitable.<sup>45</sup>

The Thirty-fourth Congress was soon flooded with petitions, resolutions, and bills aimed at settlement of the Kansas problem. Much of the agitation was initiated by Northern voters and their Representatives, who demanded a restoration of the Missouri Compromise and an investigation of the fraudulent territorial elections. Southern Representatives obstructed these propositions vigorously, and countered with proposals that federal troops be employed to enforce the decisions of the pro-slavery state legislature. Consequently, both sessions of the Thirty-fourth Congress were stormy.

The Alabama delegation was in the vanguard of those demanding respect for the rights of slaveholders in Kansas. The six Representatives, including both Americans, who voted regularly supported the extreme Southern position. Alabama, with the rest of the South, would not allow slavery to be denied access to the territories without a fight.

Further events widened the gap between North and South. Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner slandered a South Carolina colleague during a speech. Preston Brooks, a South Carolina Representative, responded by caning Sumner senseless. Northerners were inflamed by Brooks' brutality, but many Southerners, including the Alabama delegation, rushed to his defense. The attempt to expell Brooks was a failure.<sup>46</sup> Because

<sup>45</sup>Randall, *The Civil War*, 135-36.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 139-40.



of the Brooks-Sumner affair and continued violence in Kansas, public outcry in both the North and the South was now at a fever pitch.<sup>47</sup>

Back home in Alabama, Yancey and his followers saw in this renewed sectional animosity another opportunity to gain power. Radical demands had again been ignored at the national Democratic Convention in 1856, but the political condition in Alabama was different from the national scene as a whole. In Alabama, the Democrats had no Republican candidate to contend with. There was no need to nominate moderate candidates on a compromise platform. The state, especially the Black Belt sections, had been enraged by Northern activities in Kansas and continued abolitionist agitation. In the southern half of Alabama at least, the radicals could now command a greater degree of sympathy for their cause.<sup>48</sup>

Yancey had by 1857 become the acknowledged leader of the Democratic Party in southern Alabama primarily because events of the past three years seemed to have proven his dire predictions correct. It appeared the North would never rest until slavery had been abolished forever. Southern Rights Democrats were elected in five districts in 1857, isolating the conservatives, Cobb and Houston, in the north. The American Party members lost both their seats, and the party disappeared soon thereafter. The shadows the Americans had proclaimed against, foreigners and Catholics, had been replaced by more genuine fears in the minds of the Alabama populace. The voters desired Representatives who would defend their section against the dangers of Black Republicanism and slave insurrection. The Americans had not demonstrated themselves equal to the task. In Congress, the two American Representatives had meekly followed the lead of the Democrats, on Kansas and related issues. The result was a Democratic sweep in Alabama in 1857.

Not long after the Thirty-fifth Congress assembled, a vote was taken in Kansas on the slavery clause of the "Lecompton Constitution," a document written by a pro-slavery convention.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 137-39.

<sup>48</sup>Dubose, *Life of Yancey*, 335-346.

<sup>49</sup>Nichols, *Disruption*, 125-38.

Both the free-soilers and those otherwise opposed to the document refused to participate, resulting in an overwhelming victory for the slavery clause. Northern Republicans cried "swindle;" Southern radicals determined to push acceptance of the constitution through Congress, consequently making Kansas a slave state.

President Buchanan worked hard to win Kansas for the South, wielding the patronage whip against Douglas Democrats opposed to Lecompton. The effort was to no avail. A compromise known as the "English Bill" was adopted in the House, by which the entire Lecompton document would be submitted to the people of Kansas for approval. This vote, taken in 1858, resoundingly defeated the constitution. The proponents of slave extension had lost the battle.<sup>50</sup> Buchanan's mechanations in favor of the South, rather than securing Southern rights, had merely fostered a dangerous split in the Democratic party.

On the Kansas issue, the seven Alabama Congressmen had voted as a unit, supporting statehood but settling for the English compromise. They also voted together on the question of land policy. All voted to reverse Alabama's stand from previous Congresses, by opposing a homestead bill. The excuse given for this sudden shift was that the Land Distribution Act of 1854 obviated the necessity of such a law. The truth of the matter, however, was that the Homestead Act had become a part of the Republican platform. Few Southerners could bring themselves to vote for a bill supported by the Black Republicans.

Unity among the Alabamians was limited to the issues of Kansas and land policy. Houston exhibited a small degree of voting independence, while Cobb voted against his Alabama colleagues on such myriad issues as Indian appropriations, expansion into Central America, pensions, and military expenditures. As events began to play into the hands of the radical wing of the party, conservatives Houston and Cobb began to divorce themselves from radical policies. It was becoming apparent that the Southern Rights men had now acquired enough power to undermine the national Democratic Party if

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<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 176-80.

it did not meet their demands. With that collapse would come a Black Republican victory in the election of 1860. Many were already threatening secession if such should come to pass. "The concentration of the Northern masses in favor of the principles of abolition, and the fearful defection of Douglas, . . . utterly crushing the ability of the national Democracy to protect the South has convinced me that hereafter the South should place her reliance and confidence on herself alone. . . ,"<sup>51</sup> Yancey wrote in 1859.

The Congressional election of 1859 was a virtual repeat of the 1857 contest, with results exactly the same: five Southern Rights men and two conservatives elected. All won by substantial majorities, underscoring the gap widening between the two major sections of the state. Cobb and Houston continued to uphold the national Democratic Party as the savior of a Union necessary to the peoples' well-being. In the south, Yancey and his followers denounced the national party as traitorous to the South. They themselves continued to acquire greater ascendancy in the state Democratic machine.

The Congressional elections were relatively insignificant. The outcome surprised no one. Of prime importance now was the 1860 Democratic Convention to be held in Charleston the following April. The Democrats of Alabama were prepared, armed with a platform dictated by Yancey, containing the provisions, "the Congress of the United States has no power to abolish slavery in the Territories, or to prohibit its introduction into any of them."<sup>52</sup> Because of the events of the preceeding five years, the radicals could now count enough support to force acceptance of the provision or else split the Democracy.

John Brown was dead and buried by the time the Thirty-sixth Congress met in December of 1859. His insane and reckless act had alone been enough to seize upon Southern fears of slave insurrection, and evidence that he had been aided by Republican politicians served to confirm what the Southern radicals had maintained all along. To augment further the national paranoia, copies of Helper's *The Impending Crisis*

<sup>51</sup>Quoted in DuBose, *Life of Yancey*, 388.

<sup>52</sup>Griffith, *Alabama*, 374.

were found circulating among poor whites and free blacks in the South throughout 1859. This book, viewed by leading Southerners as an incendiary document calling for a class struggle throughout the section, was being suppressed in the slave states while Republicans employed it as campaign literature.<sup>53</sup>

Coupled with the recent outcome of the Kansas affair, evidence such as John Brown's raid and Helper's book convinced many Southerners that they were no longer safe in the Union unless honest concessions could be gotten from the North. Minds harkened back to the demands of Calhoun: two presidents, each with a veto power, and a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the existence of slavery.

The first session of the ill-fated Thirty-sixth Congress produced extremely little. The usual debates were fought over land policy, finance, military expenditures, and slavery; but interest was minimal. James L. Pugh of Alabama's Second District refused to vote much at all, in fact. "The truest conservatism and wisest statesmanship," he noted, "demand a speedy termination of all association with such confederates, and the formation of another union of States, homogenous in population, institutions, interests, and pursuits."<sup>54</sup>

The mind of practically everyone was focused upon the Presidential election of 1860. The Republicans, in an effort to enhance their chances in the canvass, attempted throughout the Congressional session of 1859-60 to embarrass the hapless Buchanan administration. This was not difficult as investigating groups such as the Covode Committee uncovered corruptions in the government printing office, the War Department, and other agencies of the administration. George S. Houston became one of the foremost Congressional advocates in defense of the administration, and was at one point nearly censured for his efforts. Only a parliamentary wrangle initiated by colleague Williamson Cobb saved Houston that embarrassment.<sup>55</sup>

The Democratic Convention of 1860 met in Charleston,

<sup>53</sup>Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 272-73.

<sup>54</sup>Quoted in *Harper's Weekly* 5 (February 9, 1861), 82

<sup>55</sup>36th Congress, 1st Sess., *Congressional Globe* X123: 2546-2554.

South Carolina. The site was a concession to Southern delegates whose platform demands had not been met in 1856. Now, in the focal point of Southern radicalism, the destruction of the national Democratic Party would begin. Douglas held a majority of the delegates, but the Southerners engineered a decision by which the platform would be decided prior to the presidential nominations. In committee, the Yancey plank was adopted by a bare majority, and was thus presented as part of the recommended platform. After a bitter debate, however, the Douglas slavery plank, an improvement over 1856 but nonetheless ambivalent, was accepted by a bare majority of the whole convention. This time, Yancey did not leave alone. The entire Alabama delegation followed, along with those of five other Southern states. Faced with such a disastrous split, the convention adjourned after agreeing to meet in Baltimore one month later.<sup>56</sup>

During the interim, the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, who was viewed in Alabama as the Black Republican who had maintained that a “. . . House divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure; permanently half *slave* and half *free*.” The Alabama legislature had already voted in February, 1860, to call for a state convention to consider secession if a Republican were elected president. Nothing was done to revoke that decision.<sup>57</sup>

Among the Democrats, a great deal of bargaining was carried on before Baltimore. The Douglas men at one point even proffered the vice-presidential nomination to Yancey. He refused. Ultimately, the bargaining did no good. When the Douglas delegates won the credentials fight in Baltimore and refused admittance to those who had bolted in April, the Democratic Party split irrevocably.

On election day in November, Alabama gave over half its popular vote to John C. Breckinridge, the candidate of what had been the Southern half of the Democracy. John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party commanded thirty percent of

<sup>56</sup>Randall, *The Civil War*, 175-76.

<sup>57</sup>Lincoln quoted in Randall, *The Civil War*, 160. The Legislature's action is recorded in Malcolm C. McMillan, *The Alabama Confederate Reader* (University, Alabama, 1963), 2-4.



the vote, and Douglas fifteen. Lincoln's name did not appear on the ballot. Although similar results were tallied throughout the South, the effort was of no avail. Lincoln carried enough Northern electoral votes to win the presidency without a confrontation in the House of Representatives.

When the voters of Alabama went to the polls again on December 24 to elect members to a state convention, South Carolina had already been out of the Union for a week. Unlike South Carolina, however, the people of Alabama were divided on the question of secession. Yancey and his radical following had done their work well, recovering from the losses of 1851 to command radical majorities in the Congressional elections of 1857 and 1859. Yet, secession was an extreme, irrevocable step, one that many Alabamians were loathe to take. It was one thing to bluster and talk of equal rights in the territories but quite another to sever all ties with the national government. Some, like Yancey, considered secession a right reserved to all the states. Others agreed with former Senator Jeremiah Clemens, who observed, "I do not admit the right of a majority to drag me into treason. . . ." Cobb used stronger language still, labelling secession plans "the wildest fanaticism. . . ."<sup>58</sup>

The sectional split in Alabama revealed itself more dramatically in December, 1860, than it ever had in any Congressional contest. Almost without exception, those counties below the Appalachian mountains elected secessionists to the convention, while in the northern half of the state "co-operationists" were victorious. Because the southern half of Alabama was the more populous, the secessionists were guaranteed a majority, albeit a close one.

At the convention, a minority co-operation report was defeated by the close vote of fifty-four to forty-six, before the Ordinance of Secession was adopted by twenty-two votes. Alabama had seceded, though not as a united state. Several of the northern delegates, including William R. Smith, refused to sign the Ordinance and returned home. Soon rumors were afloat that northern Alabama was going to withdraw from the state government and form its own pro-Union state, "Nick-

<sup>58</sup>Clemens quoted in McMillan, *Alabama Confederate Reader*, 14. Cobb quoted in *Harper's Weekly* 5 (February 9, 1861), 82.

jack," possibly in co-operation with eastern Tennessee. This plan came to naught, but northern Alabama Unionists would remain a thorn in the side of the Confederacy throughout the Civil War.

It fell to George S. Houston, Alabama's senior Congressman, to inform the House of Representatives of his state's action. For Houston, still an ardent Unionist, this was a difficult task. Rather than delivering a major address, Houston opted to inform the Speaker by letter of Alabama's action. He concluded by stating that "it is sufficient to say that duty requires our obedience to her sovereign will, and that we shall return to our homes, sustain her action, and share the fortunes of her people."<sup>59</sup> All of Alabama's Representatives signed the letter, save for Williamson Cobb. Cobb remained in Congress a week after the others had withdrawn, a protest against the secession he felt was unwarranted.

If Houston and Cobb had misgivings concerning the action of their state, the Southern Rights Representatives were euphoric. They were to be among the leaders in the launching of a new government, organized in Montgomery, the capital of their state. For better or worse, Alabama was attempting to withdraw from the Federal Union.

During the eleven years between the Compromise of 1850 and Alabama's departure from the Union, several issues faced the state's delegation to Congress. Some of these issues, such as land, internal improvement, and territorial questions recurred often while others, such as the Sumner-Brooks incident, were unique affairs. In the main, the Alabama Congressmen voted together on these issues. Although individual members might disagree on individual questions, the overall voting pattern indicated a fundamental agreement among the Representatives on most of the day-to-day issues facing each Congress. Yet, when the question of secession arose in awesome form after the election of Lincoln, the state, including its Representatives, divided on the issue. The reasons for this division are neither obvious nor amenable to easy explanation.

Essentially, the differences among the Congressmen were

<sup>59</sup>36th Congress, 2nd Sess., *Congressional Globe* X124: 492.

over means, rather than ends. Their voting patterns demonstrate basic agreement on the necessity of protecting the slave-agriculture system. All voted to support slavery extension, to retain slavery where it already existed, to keep the tariffs and government expenditures low. These were the day-to-day measures that insured the survival of Southern institutions, the same ones their predecessors had been supporting in Congress for decades. However, when the ultimate danger presented itself to Alabama and the South with the election of Lincoln, a fundamental question presented itself as well. Could the South remain assured of victory on those day-to-day questions? Lincoln's election had been by totally sectional vote, thereby symbolizing the loss of Southern sectional power. The North could presumably now legislate any measures it desire with or without Southern support. The Southern Rights radicals maintained that Northern hegemony meant the surrender of Southern institutions, if the slave states remained in the Union: better, therefore, to secede. The conservatives disagreed with this sentiment, holding that secession would cut off economic ties to the North, spelling financial disaster: better to remain in the Union and explore honorable means of compromise on the slavery issue with the Republicans. The threat of Northern reprisals against any secession attempt might give cause for hesitation as well.

The Southern Rights men of Alabama considered secession the logical extreme in the battle for Southern institutions. The conservatives, while supporting the radicals on the measures facing each Congress, disagreed. Secession would not protect Southern institutions, in their point of view. It was over the single issue of secession that the two groups divided, leaving Alabama a disunited state in 1861. The split was primarily geographical. In terms of experience and background, the radicals and conservatives otherwise composed a relatively homogenous group.

Of the twenty-one individuals who served Alabama in the House of Representatives between 1849 and 1861, twelve were sympathetic to radical views, while nine, three Democrats, four Whigs, and two Americans, were conservatives. The Southern Rights men were all among the elite of Alabama society. Nine attended college, all twelve were lawyers. Although all twelve

owned slaves, only seven owned more than ten, three more than twenty. Yancey, the acknowledged leader of the Southern Rights clique, owned fewer than ten slaves as well. It would appear that the defense of Southern institutions was not the exclusive concern of the larger slaveholders.

Among the conservatives, background was somewhat more divergent, but again no trends appear. Five of nine attended college; eight were professional men. Two of the conservatives, Smith and Cobb, were non-slaveholders, but this in itself was not indicative of conservative traits. Four of the six conservatives remaining owned more than ten slaves. It seems that the number of slaves owned had little direct bearing upon a Congressman's sympathy for the Union. Smith and Cobb well-represented their districts, made up largely of non-slaveholders, by their pro-Union stands, but they were unique individuals. Three other Appalachian natives were elected during the period, two of them radicals.

If slaveholding, education, and profession had almost no bearing upon a Congressman's stand for or against the Union, geography seems to have played a vital role. With little exception, those counties in the southern half of Alabama manifested widespread Southern Rights sympathy by 1861, while those in the north remained more loyal to the Union. The radicals recognized this and made every effort to erode Union strength in the north. When power in the state legislature passed into their hands after 1856, the Congressional districts were re-organized to minimize the effect of up-State conservative votes. In the elections of 1857 and 1859, conservative victories were confined to two districts when in fact Unionist majorities could be counted in about forty-five percent of the counties in the state.

The radical comeback in Alabama between 1851 and 1861 was dramatic. Limited to a single Black Belt district in 1851, the Southern Rights men by 1857 commanded five districts; including all the lower river valleys, the Pine Belt, the Black Belt, and some portions of the Appalachians. Only the Tennessee Valley and the northern Appalachians remained free of their control. The reasons for this comeback were varied. The collapse of the Whigs, a strong conservative element in

state politics, was a tremendous asset to the radicals. The Americans were not a potent replacement for the Whigs due to their adherence to issues that became increasingly meaningless to many Alabamians. When confronted with the issue of slavery extension in its fullest fury after 1855, the Americans demonstrated themselves ill-equipped to handle it. The result was a desertion from their ranks to those of the Democrats.

Confusion among the Democrats themselves proved lucrative to the radicals. As events conspired to embarrass the position of the national party with regard to the territories, the radicals were able to present themselves as the staunch defenders of Southern institutions. While the conservatives continued to compromise with their Northern colleagues in the face of Kansas turmoil, John Brown, Hinton Helper, and Abolitionism, the radicals would have none of it. They stood for the South and the South alone. This was the kind of stand the people of southern Alabama increasingly desired. Their entire economy was geared to the slave system, and only the Southern Rights men appeared truly involved in its defense. The various compromises the conservatives had supported through the years came to naught, leaving the Southern system more threatened than ever. In the south at least, the radicals could present themselves as the guardians of all the voters held dear.

In northern Alabama, where the slave system was less important, the defense the radicals offered was relatively meaningless. The conservative ideology, which insured continued cooperation with states to the north, was the kind of program the northern half of Alabama desired. The long-continued trade with the North would only be disrupted, and perhaps destroyed, by secession. This was the essential difference. Southern Alabama's stake was in the slave system, while northern Alabama depended on economic cooperation with Northern neighbors. The one system inspired a drive for secession early in 1861. The other militated against it.

#### Alabama's Congressmen, 1849-1861

Dist	Name	Tenure	Party	Educ.	Geo-Ec	Prof	Slaves	Depart
2	Abercrombie, J.	51-55	UW	2	1	10	5	50
1	Alston, W. J.	49-51	W	3	1	10	5	50
1	Bowdon, F. W.	46-51	D	6	3	10	2	50



1	Bragg, J.	51-53	D	6	4	10	2	50
3	Clopton, D.	59-61	SRD	6	1	10	3	80
7	Curry, J. L. M.	57-61	SRD	6	3	10	1	80
6	Cobb, W. R. W.	47-61	D	1	3	20	0	80
7	Dowdell, J. F.	53-59	SRD	6	1	12	4	50
3	Harris, S. W.	47-57	SRD	6	1	10	3	50
2	Hilliard, H. W.	45-51	W	6	1	10	3	50
5	Houston, G. S.	41-49	D	4	5	10	4	80
		51-61						
5	Hubbard, D.	49-51	SRD	4	5	10	3	10
4	Inge, S. W.	47-51	SRD	2	1	10	2	50
4	Moore, S.	57-61	SRD	5	1	10	2	80
1	Phillips, P.	53-55	SRD	5	4	10	1	50
2	Pugh, J. L.	59-61	SRD	5	4	12	3	80
2	Shorter, E. S.	55-59	SRD	6	4	12	4	50
4	Smith, W. R.	51-57	U,A	5	3	10	0	10
1	Stallworth, J. A.	57-61	SRD	2	4	10	4	80
1	Walker, P.	55-57	A	6	4	30	?	50
7	White, A.	51-53	UW	5	3	10	1	50
3	Yancey, W. L.*	44-46	SRD	5	1	12	2	60

*Codes**Party:*

UW—Union Whig  
W—Whig  
D—Democrat  
SRD—Southern Rights Democrat  
U—Unionist  
A—American

*Education:*

1—limited  
2—common school  
3—private school  
4—academy  
5—attended college  
6—college graduate

*Geo-economic Area:*

1—black belt  
3—Appalachians  
4—lower river vallies  
5—Tennessee Valley

*Profession:*

10—lawyer  
12—lawyer, farmer  
20—farmer  
30—doctor

*Slaves:*

0—0 slaves  
1—1-4  
2—5-9  
3—10-19  
4—20-49  
5—50-99

\*Although William L. Yancey was not a member of Congress between 1849 and 1861, he did exert considerable political influence upon the Congressional races of the period. For that reason, he is included in the listing of Congressmen.

*Reason for Departure:*

- 10—defeated for re-election  
 50—retired  
 60—resigned, personal reasons  
 80—withdrew due to secession

Voting Scales for Alabama Congressmen,  
 Congresses 31-36\*\*

*31st Congress*

Dist.	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	Alston, W. J. (W)	2	2	—	2	—	—	—
2	Hilliard, H. W. (W)	2	2	0	2	—	—	2
3	Harris, S. W. (SRD)	2	0	—	2	—	—	0
4	Inge, S. W. (SRD)	2	0	0	2	0	—	0
5	Hubbard, D. (SRD)	2	0	0	2	—	—	—
6	Cobb, W. R. W. (D)	2	2	2	2	0	—	—
7	Bowdon, F. W. (D)	2	0	—	2	0	—	0

*Codes:*

<i>I</i> —Sectionalism	<i>II</i> —Compromise of 1850	<i>III</i> —Land Policy
2—Pro South	0—anti	0—conservative
	2—pro	2—liberal

\*\*The scales presented here are the product of a computer research product intended to discover the voting behavior patterns of the Congressmen from all fifteen slave states between 1849 and 1861. Essential to this process were the "Congressional Roll-Call votes" supplied on computer tape by the *Inter-University Consortium for Political Research*. A codebook listing the substance of each individual roll call accompanied the voting data itself, making it possible to categorize groups of votes according to issue. This done, Southern Congressional attitudes on each issue were derived through use of a scaling technique. Computer program "Guttman Scale" from the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* was employed in building the scales. The scales measure the degree of a Congressman's agreement with a particular issue by counting the number of votes in a single direction, pro or anti. Once assembled, the scales for each issue were divided into three positions: essentially "strongly agree," "moderate," and "strongly disagree." The end product was that each individual Congressman was assigned one of three positions on each issue. If a Congressman failed to scale by not voting, he was considered an unknown, and is represented in the charts with a dash (—). Those interested in the technical aspects of the scaling technique should consult either Bent, Dale, H., et al, *SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences: Second Edition* (New York, 1975), or Edwards, Allen, *Techniques of Attitude and Scale Construction* (New York, 1957).

<i>IV</i> —Improvements (1st Sess.)	<i>V</i> —Improvements (2nd Sess.)
2—pro	0—anti
<i>VI</i> —Postage	<i>VII</i> —Government Operations
	0—discourage
	2—encourage

\* \* \* \* \*

### *32nd Congress*

Dist.	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	Bragg, J. (D)	—	1	0	—	1	0
2	Abercrombie, J. (UW)	2	—	2	0	2	—
3	Harris S. W. (SRD)	—	—	2	0	2	—
4	Smith, W. R. (U)	0	2	2	2	—	2
5	Houston, G. S. (D)	2	2	2	0	1	0
6	Cobb, W. R. G. (D)	2	2	2	0	2	—
7	White, A. (UW)	2	2	2	0	2	—

### *Codes:*

<i>I</i> —War Pensions	<i>II</i> —Slavery	<i>III</i> —Land Policy
0—conservative	1—moderate	0—conservative
2—liberal	2—pro	2—liberal
<i>IV</i> —Nebraska Org.	<i>V</i> —Railroad Grants	<i>VI</i> —Improvements
0—anti	1—moderate	0—anti
2—pro	2—pro	pro

\* \* \* \* \*

### *33rd Congress*

Dist	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV	V
1	Phillips, P. (SRD)	2	1	2	0	2
2	Abercrombie J. (UW)	2	1	2	—	—
3	Harris, S. W. (SRD)	2	—	2	0	2
4	Smith, W. R. (U)	2	—	2	0	—
5	Houston, G. S. (D)	2	0	2	0	—
6	Cobb, W. R. W. (D)	2	0	2	0	2
7	Dowdell, J. F. (SRD)	2	—	2	0	—

*Codes:*

I—Kansas-Nebraska Act

2—pro

II—Texas Debt Payment

0—anti

1—moderate

III—Tariff Revision

2—lower rates

IV—Improvements

0—anti

V—Land Policy

2—liberal

\* \* \* \* \*

*34th Congress*

Dist	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	Walker, P. (A)	—	2	2	2	2	2
2	Shorter, E. S. (D)	—	2	—	2	2	—
3	Harris, S. W. (SRD)	—	—	—	—	2	2
4	Smith, W. R. (A)	2	—	2	2	1	2
5	Houston, G. S. (D)	—	2	—	2	2	—
6	Cobb, W. R. W. (D)	0	2	2	2	—	2
7	Dowdell, J. F. (SRD)	0	2	—	2	2	2

*Codes:*

I—Improvements

0—anti

2—pro

II—Tariff Revision

2—lower rates

III—Railroad Grants

2—pro

IV—Kansas Action

2—Southern position

V—Slavery

1—moderate

2—pro

VI—Brooks-Sumner Affair

2—pro-Brooks

\* \* \* \* \*

*35th Congress*

Dist	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	Stallworth, J. (SRD)	—	0	—	0	—	—	—
2	Shorter, E. S. (SRD)	—	2	2	0	0	2	2
3	Dowdell, J. F. (SRD)	—	0	2	0	0	2	2

4	Moore, S. (SRD)	0	0	2	0	—	2	—
5	Houston, G. S. (D)	0	1	2	0	0	2	2
6	Cobb, W. R. W. (D)	2	2	0	0	0	2	0
7	Curry, J. L. (SRD)	0	0	2	0	—	2	2

*Codes:*

I—Indian Policy	II—Pensions	III—Expansion
0—large reservations	0—anti	0—anti
2—small reservations	1—moderate	2—pro
	2—pro	

## IV—Land Policy

0—conservative

## V—Improvements

0—anti

## VI—English Compromise

2—pro

## VII—Military Expenditure

0—low

2—high

\* \* \* \* \*

*36th Congress*

Dist	Name (party)	I	II	III	IV
1	Stallworth J. (SRD)	2	—	—	2
2	Pugh, J. L. (SRD)	—	0	—	2
3	Clopton, D. (SRD)	—	0	—	2
4	Moore, S. (SRD)	2	0	0	2
5	Houston, G. S. (D)	2	0	0	—
6	Cobb, W. R. W. (D)	2	0	0	2
7	Curry, J. L. (SRD)	2	0	0	2

*Codes:*

## I—Military Expend. (1st Session)

2—pro

## II—Land Policy

0—conservative

## III—Gov't Loan

0—anti

## IV—Slavery

2—pro

\* \* \* \* \*



John F. Marszalek (Ed.), *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1861-1866*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979. xxx, 496. Map, illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00)

Emma Holmes, a member of one of Charleston's old, elite families, faithfully kept a journal during the Civil War and early Reconstruction. She wrote not only for herself, but also with the future in mind, hoping that her diary someday would be valued "as a record of the events which mark the formation and growth of our glorious Southern Confederacy." Holmes was only twenty-two when she began her journal and lived in both Charleston and Camden, South Carolina, during the war. She recorded the everyday events in the lives of her family, friends, and acquaintances, and she also noted the rumors and reports that she heard about the war. Intensely patriotic to the South and to her native South Carolina, she freely expressed her opinion about politics, war, and society. Although serious and self-righteous, Holmes did not fail to relate humorous events such as a story about a Charlestonian who tried to communicate with several Frenchmen by "talking very loud and distinctly, as if they were deaf." A thorough aristocrat, she held a dim view of the upcountry, had little use for Charleston's "mobocracy," and after the war missed having things "all ready prepared to my hand." While her account differs in tone and content from Mary Boykin Chesnut's *A Diary from Dixie*, it nicely supplements that volume.

While Holmes' diary is useful, the quality of the editing is at best mixed. Editor John Marszalek wrote an informative introduction to the volume which provides background on Holmes. The footnotes are few and also helpful, although it is difficult to determine the editor's criteria for deciding whether or not to identify an individual. Marszalek deleted about one-fourth of the diary, mostly catalogs of names and military matters, and he carefully marked the excisions with elipsis marks. While one can quibble with some of his decisions, especially, when he deleted words that he believed left Holmes' style untidy, random checking indicates that nothing major was omitted.

Comparison of the transcription against the original manu-

script reveals that Marszalek accurately copied the words in the text, but his style of editing falls short of modern standards. He only partially spelled out his editorial method, possibly because he himself was confused about it. For instance, in copying the volume he was unsure about what to do with ampersands — sometimes leaving them as written and other times transcribing them as “and.” Similarly, at times he italicized the words that Holmes underlined and at other times he did not. These and other inconsistencies in transcription mar the volume.

The volume's greatest flaw is its index. The usefulness of a documentary publication is largely determined by the quality of its index, since a good index makes the information in the text available to a wide variety of researchers, both professionals and amateurs, who might not ordinarily read the entire volume. The index here is only six pages long and omits all but a few of the names mentioned in the text. Marszalek neglected to include many frequently mentioned individuals and even omitted most of the persons that he deemed significant enough to identify in the notes. The subject entries are poorly constructed and many of them lack subentries. For example, among the subjects without subentries are “religion” with forty-six references, “literature” with fifty-one references, and “social life” with sixty-one references. South Carolina place names, which appear throughout the volume, are also largely neglected.

Emma Holmes's diary provides an interesting account of life in South Carolina in the 1860's through the eyes of a literate aristocrat. It is a pity that the book did not get the careful attention from the editor and publisher that it deserved.

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W. David Lewis and Wesley Phillips Newton. *Delta: The History of an Airline*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1979. 503 pp. xiii. Contents, preface, illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index, \$15.)

This book, researched with funds from the Delta Air Lines

Foundation, presents a detailed and interesting narrative history of the nation's fifth largest but most profitable airline. It was written for a large general audience as part of Delta's fiftieth anniversary celebration and its commercial success is already assured because the company has placed a very large order for it.

The enterprise began in Macon, Georgia, in 1924 as a crop dusting division of the Huff Daland Company. In 1925 Huff Daland Dusters moved from Macon to Monroe, Louisiana, an excellent location because of the large cotton fields in the Mississippi Delta region. Furthermore, C. E. Woolman, one of the important employees of the division and future head of Delta, knew the Monroe area well. He had been employed by the agricultural extension service in Louisiana which had enabled him to travel extensively throughout the northern part of the state and meet many people and prospective customers. The fledgling division soon expanded operations to several other states and then to South America.

The executives of the division were eventually able to purchase the operations from the parent company which had by then changed its name to the Keystone Aircraft Corporation. On November 12, 1928, C. E. Woolman and associates incorporated Delta Air Service before a Monroe notary public. The name had been suggested by Catherine FitzGerald, a secretary and future director and assistant treasurer of the company, because the firm was based in the Mississippi Delta area.

The new owners then decided to begin passenger service. On June 17, 1929, Delta's first passenger flight took place from the western terminus Dallas, Texas, to Monroe; Birmingham, Alabama, was the eastern terminus. In 1930, because of an adverse government ruling in air mail contracts, the firm was forced to sell its passenger routes to Aviation Corporation or AVCO (present-day American Airlines).

But Delta did not leave the air industry. Shortly thereafter, an assortment of planes and other equipment was purchased from AVCO for \$12,500. Then the enterprise was rechartered by the state of Louisiana as Delta Air Corporation. It was barred from passenger flights under its old name because of

an agreement with AVCO, but not under its new name. For the moment, however, the company returned exclusively to crop dusting. Times were hard because of the Great Depression, but the firm was frugal and had the support of a Monroe banking institution.

In 1934 air mail contracts were reviewed by Roosevelt's administration and Delta received a coveted mail route and subsidy. With this government aid, the firm was able to resume passenger flights and by the late 1930's it was an established "small but successful regional airline." (p. 64) In March, 1940, stewardess service began.

The continued growth of Delta brought about a change in headquarters. Monroe at that time was a small city with a limited ability to sustain a viable commercial airline. Atlanta, however, was the hub of the route system and since the firm's maintenance facilities were already there, it became the new base of operations. This important move to a large city with abundant financial resources "augured well for sound future development," (p. 81) and later history has borne this out. A sentimental attachment remained for Monroe, however, and the company's annual stockholders meeting is still held there.

Delta thus entered World War II with a solid foundation for expansion and found wartime conditions conducive to just that. An ever-present, aggressive campaign for additional routes and two mergers, one with Chicago and Southern in the early 1950's and the other with Northeast Airlines in 1972, were also very important in the Delta success story. A brief account of Chicago and Southern is given in a separate chapter. Both mergers brought the company an expanded route system but created problems in personnel that were eventually solved. The mergers also increased the fleet of airplanes used, and the book tells how the company carried out a program of disposal and standardization to insure efficiency and economy. Information about and pictures of the types of aircraft used from Huff Daland days to the present jumbo jets are also presented. In the early 1960's, Delta became a transcontinental carrier with routes to the west coast, and then in 1978 an intercontinental airline when a route was opened to London.

The book emphasizes the family type of feeling that existed among the employees in Delta's past and which has continued to the present. This attitude was exemplified by the book's central figure — C. E. Woolman. According to the authors, he had a paternalistic approach to the company which he served as a benevolent overlord. Despite a homespun look Woolman had a "shrewd mind and an inexhaustible ambition." (p. 30) His style was summed up by one discerning observer who called him a "'gentle autocrat.'" (p. 36) When Woolman disappeared from the scene, he was replaced by a management team typical of other large corporations.

General information concerning economic affairs of the company is given in the text, and three appendixes contain statistical data from the 1930's through 1977. Lewis and Newton were able to examine all corporate records, and conducted many oral interviews with company officials both active and retired who were responsible for the growth of Delta. The outcome is a good economic history that is recommended to anyone interested in commercial aviation.

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William Warren Rogers. *Pebble Hill: The Story of a Plantation*. Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 1979), Pp. xix, 168.

*Pebble Hill* is the story of a plantation outside of Thomasville, Georgia, and the people whose lives have been intertwined with it. The story begins with Thomas Jefferson Johnson, a hard-nosed businessman-farmer on the Southern Georgia frontier in the 1820s. Thoroughly bitten with the land-acquisition bug Johnson steadily enlarged his holdings over the next twenty years and became one of Thomas County's wealthiest citizens. The estate remained in Johnson's family until the 1890s, when the plantation passed into the hands of the Hanna family who tended it with the loving pride of its original owners. With the death of the last of the Hanna owners Pebble Hill became the property of a private foundation.

This volume is more than the story of a house or a piece of land. It is a fascinating tale of the residents who represent



very specific illustrations of the major trends of economic and social history of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century South: the chancy life on the early Southern frontier where death was never far away; the upheaval of the Civil War and Reconstruction era when personal property evaporated with emancipation and land values plummeted; the pleasurable lifestyle of affluent Yankees enjoying a fashionable winter resort. The book catches in a very real sense Southerners' love of the land and the magnetic hold of the South on those who came to dinner and never went home.

*Pebble Hill* is based primarily on prodigious research in the Thomas County courthouse and in courthouses of neighboring counties. Nobody knows better than Professor Rogers how to mine a courthouse for local history, and *Pebble Hill* is an example of the art at its best. Marriage records, deed books, court minutes, court dockets, will books, tax digests are a few of the types of materials used to trace the building of a plantation, its division, and its recreation. This is the way history should be written: specific local studies based on local sources followed by the sweeping historical generalities. All too often, unfortunately, historians write history the other way, with generalities first, based on sources more easily handled than those Professor Rogers has relied upon.

The book is also instructive for those interested in doing a family history where no substantial body of family manuscripts or journals exist. Such was the case with *Pebble Hill's* people, but the author has demonstrated what a courthouse and hard work can accomplish.

Professor Rogers has wisely included detailed genealogical charts, copies of land plats, and maps to guide the reader through the maze of names, family relationships, and land transactions. The text is well organized and eminently readable. However, more careful editing would improve some of the book's ragged prose.

Overall, *Pebble Hill* is fortunate to have Professor Rogers tell its story. The reader leaves the book wanting to visit the place and meet its people.

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University of Alabama











# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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THE DIARY OF JOHN S. TUCKER:  
CONFEDERATE SOLDIER FROM ALABAMA

edited by

Gary Wilson

During the Civil War a number of soldiers on both sides recorded their experiences in personal diaries. John S. Tucker, a Confederate soldier from Alabama, was one such individual.

Tucker was born in 1834 and apparently lived in Alabama his entire life except during the war years. Following the war, he returned to Greensboro, Alabama. In 1876 he was elected sheriff of Hale County, but he evidently only served in that capacity a short time. On the 1880 census he was employed as a merchant in Greensboro. Tucker does not appear on the 1900 census, although his wife, Annie, and his three sons, Walter, Tene, and Fitz James, were living in Greensboro at that time. According to Mrs. Frances Test, granddaughter of John Tucker, an unidentified individual murdered Tucker. The violent act occurred at night while Tucker worked as railroad stationmaster in Greensboro. Presently, the exact date of Tucker's death is unknown; however, it is probable that he died in Greensboro between 1880 and 1900.

On May 30, 1860 Tucker married Annie Nutting in Green County, Alabama. In May the following year Tucker departed Greensboro as a member of Company D, 5th Alabama Regiment. The Alabamian apparently did not keep a diary in the early part of the war, and evidently he returned to Greensboro in his first year of service. The initial entry in Tucker's diary is March 23, 1862, and on that date he left Greensboro destined for Richmond, Virginia.

He recorded his experiences in three small booklets. The first one covers the dates March 23, 1862 to August 14, 1862, the second volume begins August 15, 1862 and ends November 29, 1863, and the last booklet starts on May 22, 1864 and concludes February 28, 1865. There are no entries from November 30, 1863 to May 21, 1864; however, it is likely that Tucker wrote a volume for this period but it has since been lost.

Tucker was a private when he entered the Confederate service in 1861, and on June 17, 1862 he became his company's supply sergeant. Since he did not mention another promotion, he probably was a sergeant until his last entry in 1865. Throughout most of the war, Tucker lived and worked behind the lines. His comments are significant, however, because they represent the experiences of a common soldier in one of the Confederacy's most important armies — the Army of Northern Virginia. Tucker served the first part of the war as a member of the First Corps, Army of the Potomac, commanded by General P.G.T. Beauregard. Later there were several command changes which affected Company D, 5th Alabama Regiment. For much of the war E. L. Hobson commanded the 5th Alabama Regiment which was a part of Brigadier General R. E. Rodes' Brigade, of Major General Daniel H. Hill's Division. As a member of this army, Tucker was present at many of the most important battles of the war: Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness Campaign, and Petersburg.

Throughout the conflict, Tucker kept almost daily records of his activities. The following manuscript includes only the most important entries of Tucker's diary, and the spelling and language has been kept as exact as possible. This author owes special gratitude to Mrs. Frances Test of Houston, Texas and Robert Dalehite of Galveston, Texas, current guardian of the Tucker diary, for providing valuable assistance in this endeavor.

Sunday Mar 23d 1862

Left Greensboro at 2 O clock AM got to selma. went aboard the Senator & arrived in Montgomery at 12M.

Monday Mar 24

spent the day in Montgomery & had quite a dull time of it.

Mar 25 1862

Took the cars at 8 O'clock A.M. got to Atlanta at night.

Mar 26 1862

arrived in Augusta got Breakfast & took the Cars for Weldon

Mar 27 1862

arrived in Weldon at 10 A.M. Met any quantity of Troops. Could get nothing to eat & had to remain until night when we took a Box Car for Richmond.

Mar 28 1862

arrived in Petersburg at sun up, after passing a *very Cold* sleepless night in an open Box Car — went through the City on foot & took the train for Richmond where we arrived at 11 O'clock am.

Sunday 30 —

still in Richmond. took Box Cars at 4 O'clock & remained at depot until 8. spending the most unpleasant night since we left home.

— 31 —

On the RR all day with scarsly any thing to eat. Got to orange C.H. in the night. went to Epis Church & slept till morning.

Apl 1st 1862

Got up cooked our breakfast & left for Camp 5 Miles east of orange. arrived about 10 O'clock & met all the Boys.

— 2 —

spent the day in Camp. went to the 6th Ala & saw a good many acquaintances.

Thursday 3d 1862

Got orders to strike Tents & report at Orange C.H. Got there about 11 O'clk P.M. & camped on the side of a hill in an oak thicket on the east side of the Town & RR. pleasant night.

Apl 5th 1862

Got orders early this morning to *again* strike tent & report at orange C.H. as soon as possible. Packed up. put out & got there at 11 O'clk. A.M. & took open cars at dark. traveled all night. got no sleep at all.

Apl 6th 1862

Got to Richmond at 12 O'Clk & was treated very hospitably by the Citizens who met us with Cakes. Pres Bread. Meat & every thing good to eat. passed through the City & took a Steamer at 3 O'Clk P.M. & at 12M got off & marched the remainder of the night without any sleep for 2 nights.

Apl 7 1862

Stoped marching at sun up got breakfast & continued the march. arrived on the Battle field at 11 O'Clk A.M. where the Roar of Canon & musketing was destinctly heard & our Reg held in reserve. put up Bunks. Commenced raining & continued all night. Got no sleep at all.

Apl 8 1862

Still continues to rain. remained in camp all day. Brisk skirmishing going on all the time in a half mile of us. Got orders at dark to march to Mulbony Island a distance of 10 ms. Mud a foot deep nearly all the way. raining & awful cold. Got to camp at midnight. as wet as a rat & so Cold I could hardly walk. Worst March of the campaign.

Thursday. Apl 10th

Still in camp to day. Very cold yet snowing. Havent had my Boots off in five nights nor slept scarsly now at all during the times. Expecting Marching orders.

Friday Apl 11 1862

clear & pretty day. Got marching orders & left for Yorktown after dinner. Camped for the night in a mile of the City. Been quite unwell all day.

Saturday 12th 1862

Got up & continued the march to Yorktown & camped on the field that Cornwallis surrendered on and closed the first "American Revolution" Plenty of Yankees in sight of us but no fighting going on. Fair pretty day. feeling much better to day than yesterday.



Sunday Apl 13 1862

In camp & doing nothing. the day most unlike Sunday. some Playing Cards. Some washing clothes & others at various other things. Went in Town & looked all over it. A very delapidated looking place. Most of the houses shelled burned or pulled down & camps in place. fine day.

Wednesday Apl 16

Fair day. Brisk skirmishing going on. Yankees in sight. Out on picket all day. In the evening a regular engagement commenced & lasted until dark. Very heavy Canonading. Yankee loss heavy. Ours not so great. Was in about 1 1/2 Miles of the Battle.

Sunday Apl 20th

Rained all night last night. All hands got wet. didnt sleep but very little. To day seems most unlike Sunday. Instead of resting from our labours & listening to Church Bells, we hear nothing but the Roar of artillery & see nothing but large squads of men at allmost every imaginable Army work & duty. those not on duty or most of them amuse themselves by playing Poker, singing vulgar songs. Cursing & swearing & etc. Rained all day.

Saturday Apl 26

Rained the whole day. got a good nights sleep last night & had a good dinner to day. Peas pork biscuit & for desert Pan Cakes & Syrup. Wrote to Annie by Mr. Corvin.

Sunday Apl 27

To day the election of officers take place still cloudy but not raining this morning. Passed the Whiskey round & opened the polls. Election resulted. Peques "Col" Hall "Lt Col" Hobron "Major" as field officers. For Company I "Greensboro Guards" J W Williams "Capt" Dr. Rawisay "1st Lt" Joe Borden "2nd Lt" WC Tunstall 3d Lt" EP Jones O.S. This has been a Big day in many of the Regiments in electing their field & company officers & a great many of the men got gloriously *tight* — Ordered from the woods back to York Town at dark 110 men in the Co & 60 odd on the sick list.

Saturday May 3d

Nothing new to note. All quiet. orders to emigrate at 7 O'Clk P.M. & evacuated York Town burning Tents spiking Canon & destroying every thing that could not be taken away.

Sunday May 4

Marched all night last night through the mud & got to Williamsburg at 12 O'Clk PM a very nice though quite an old looking place. The Country surrounding for miles being all cleared up rendered the view magnificiently beautiful. The whole plain being covd with Troops artillery cavalry. Wagons ambulances & all moving in the same direction extending as far as the eye could see. In passing through Williamsb'g all the eligible places in the buildings were crowded with men women & children all of whom wore a countenance of Sadness & deep regret They knew we were on the retreat and I could not help feeling sorry for a people who were burning with a feeling of humiliation at the prospect of their quiet firesides soon being visited by a set of "yankee Mauraders" & made desolate. We were marched out 2 ms north of the City when we camped for the night and had the pleasure of enjoying a good nights sleep all hands were much in need of.

Monday May 5th

The advance of the Yankees attacked our rear guard Yesterday & had a sharp skirmish in which we repulsed them taking 1 canon 5 caisons & a number of Prisoners. The attack was again renewed this morning with more energy & most of the Army was ordered back at day light to the scene of action a short distance south of Williamsburg. We left for the scene of action at 1 P.M. & doubled quicked it for 2 miles through mud & water. Were drawn up in line of Battle & held in reserve — the fight raged all day & rain poured down incessantly. We captured 9 canon a lot of Horses over 300 prisoners & a stand of colours, besides killing many. loss of life on our side very small until late in the evening when 2 Reg were ordered to charge a redoubt in an open field and were nearly annihilated. Dark came on & separated the Combatants each holding their own positions. all kind of wounds could be seen as the men were brought in. The Reg had to stand in lines

of Battle in an open field nearly all night without fire & in a cold hard rain. I was detailed to assist in carrying off the wounded & at dark *flew up to Roost* in a Hen house but didnt get a particle of sleep.

#### Tuesday May 6th

Commenced retreating again this morning at 2 O'clk A.M. The troops nearly all broken down from fatrigrs hunger & want of sleep. The Road for 5 miles was strewn with Blankets, over coats, clothing, knapSacks, Cooking Utinsils, Sick Men &c &c. Roads awful muddy & Wagons & artillery continually boging down. The Sick & wounded left in Williamsburg at the mercy of the Yankees. The march was continued 18 or 20 miles to a little place called "ordinary" (quite an appropriate name) when we camped for the night. The men were so hungry that they ate corn, collard stalks, Turnips, Beets or any thing they could get hands on.

#### Friday May 9th

Took up the line of march at 11 a.m. Got to Chickahomine River at night and camped for the night. Bad roads but good weather. all very tired & hungry and nothing to eat. soon killed some Beeves. got hard Bread & was all right.

#### Sunday May 11 1862

Nothing new to note to day. had two Battallion Drills to day which is the first drilling I have done since I've been in the service. Ed & Geo returned to camp.

#### Thursday May 15th

All hands roused up this morning out of our comfortable Bunks an hour before day-light & didnt take up the line of march until ½ past 3 O'clk. Then went about 4 miles and camped. had a muddy wet & disagreeable march.

#### Friday May 16th

Commenced traveling again at 11 O'clk a.m. and continued until after dark. Roads very bad & all quite hungry. Truly is the life of a soldier hard.

Saturday May 17th

Traveled again to day & Bivouaced at night on a level plain covered with Honey-Suckle bushes as thick as they could Stand, about waist high and in full bloom, which presented to the eye quite a pretty Flower Garden. I imagined if Annie had been there how very soon would she have had her *pretty little hands* full of them, but to the weary and hungry Soldier they did not present many charms. Drew our Rations cooked & eat our dinner & supper & tumbled down upon our blankets to rest, repose and refresh ourselves for the toils of tomorrow.

Sunday May 18th

Continued our journey early this morning & struck camp within 3 miles of Richmond at 11 O'clk A.M. where it is thought we will remain for some time — having run about as far as we can without giving up Richmond. Went to an Ice pond in the evening and had a glorious wash. Thousands of Troops in Bathing & having a jolly time of it.

Monday May 19th

Had to report on the sick list for the 1st time. Have had Diarrhea pretty bad all day & feel quite unwell. Got a pr of New Shoes to day which came in a good time.

Thursday May 22

Fine day. Still in Camp at same place. Got appointment of Clerk of the Company which relieves me of Drill Wrote to Annie.

Friday May 23 1862

On detail to day. to go to Richmond & arrest stragglers. Went all over the whole city & out to Camp Winder — the nastiest place I ever saw in my life. Got back to camp at daylight having been up all night and about as tired as I well could be.

Sunday May 25th

Left our Camp this morning & went out on picket on the same road we came up on, and about 5 miles distant making the distance to Richmond 8 miles. A fight expected every hour but every thing has been unusually quiet to day. perhaps

its owning to "McClellan<sup>s</sup>" religious proclivities — being opposed to fighting on Sunday. Have passed the day in sleeping & reading the "Bible" only when on duty. Cloudy but pleasant Weather.

#### Saturday May 31st

Had 2 days rations hard bred issued fixed up & moved off at 8 O'Clk AM to attack the enemy — had to go through mud & water, the latter in many places waist deep. Creeks, Ponds & Branches — for about 5 miles. Engaged the enemy at 2 O'Clk & had a desperate fight which lasted until dark. We drove them back one mile taking all their earth works a large number of canon, small arms, amunition. Camp equipage provisions &c &c our loss very heavy. Most of our Boys exchanged their Guns for better ones. got canteens & many other little tricks from the Yankees. we slept on the field and on

#### Sunday June 1st

the attack was again renewed on our left & a desperate fight ensued lasting until about 12 O'clk & resulting in the repulse of the enemy with the loss of their camp equipages &c &c. We buried all of our dead this evening & at night marched back several miles over very muddy roads & camped for the night. all hands nearly broken down.

#### Tuesday June 3d

a fight expected to day & the whole army drawn up in a line of Battle where they remained until night without a Fight. our whole army fell back yesterday about 2 miles this side of the Battlefield of Saturday & sunday for the purpose of getting a better position & an other Big fight is hourly expected. Commenced at dark & Rained the entire night has hard as it could pour and our camp was in a complete flood.

#### Saturday June 7th

Rained nearly all day. Sharp Skirmishing going on a good part of the day. Issued Whiskey to the Reg: & the Boys all got pretty lively.



Sunday June 8 1862

Heavy canonading near camp this morning. Went to church to day for the first time in the army & listened to an excellent sermon, Introduction — Hym — "Show pitty Lord O! Lord Let a repenting *rebel* Live."

Text.

2 Ch & 3d verse of second Timothy. in which was drawn a striking contrast between the C. Soldier & the soldier of the Cross — delivered by the Rev Mr. Hogue — a talented & nice speaker. He gave us much good advice, the most important of which was to abstain from the use of *Ardent Spirits* & profane *swearing*, two of the worst habits in an army. particularly the latter as an *oath* is always on the end of the tongue of at least three fourths. The former is not much indulged in as it is seldom issued — however we got a ration of it yesterday & all seemed to enjoy it freely — and I some times think that it was occasionally issued in small quantities when we are in the rain mud & water it would be an advantage — particularly to health.

Got a letter from Annie to day & answered the same — also wrote to Ma.

Tuesday June 17th

Quite cold last night & there was almost frost this morning. clear cool & pleasant day. Got the appointment of Com'y Sgt which relieves me from all company duty, gives me a horse to ride & pays \$7 a month more than a private.

Sunday June 22d

Today has passed off very quickly — at this writing I am sitting on a Breast work beside the Williamsburg Turnpike. 3 miles from Richmond in a large barren field. where I can see at a glance any quantity of Camps, Troops Wagons moving to & fro. Artillery, Caissons, ambulances, Horses and all the appliances of "grim visaged War" and in the distance far above the top of trees is plainly exhibited the Yankee Balloon taking a view of our position, works and Capitol. That some important movement is on foot is evident but what it is none

except the leaders know. The day has been beautiful and pleasant beyond description & the weather all that could be desired since May 30th, but alas! its too far from *home* & the loved ones to render the Situation agreeable or pleasant to me under any Circumstances.

Tuesday June 24 1862

Continues Pleasant & dull. Had a hard summers Rain late in the evening which effectually layed a disagreeable dust. Visited the 11th Ala to day & saw a good many of the Marengo Co boys.

Thursday June 26

Our Reg was called up twice last night. The second time at 3 O clk this morning when they were moved off about 6 miles to the Mechanicsville Turnpike when a hard battle has been going on since 4 P.M. until this writing (after Sun down) with what result I know not, having been left in charge of Com'y Stores —its quite likely our Reg and Brigade is engaged. Will join them in the morning & learn all the facts. The weather is beautiful & any quantity of fighting is anticipated on tomorrow.

Friday June 27th 1862

Went to sleep last night with the roar of Canon sounding in my ears & was woke up before day-break this morning to pack up & move Com'y Stores &c and the same sound was going on. I hastened to the scene of action & succeeded in finding the Reg at 11 AM & found they had not been engaged. I then returned to bring up the Com'y wagons & did not get with it again. Saw any quantity of wounded & dead men & all the pariphanalia of war. truly is war a horrid necessity. The weather is clear & pleasant & the roads very dusty.

Saturday June 28 1862

Got back to Maj Websters Camp last night & remained with him. This morning had the wagons loaded with provisions and returned to the Reg finding it late in evening — in going on I passed over several Battle Fields that were strongly contested & the sight of dead men & horses was appalling —

lying in every direction & horribly thick. Southerners & Yankees all together. The fight was hardest yesterday evening & Geo Price was badly wounded in making a charge. We have any quantity of goods & Chattles captured from the enemy.

Sunday June 29

Remained at the Wagon yard to day & issued Rations to the sick in camp & rested. Nearly worn out from riding night and day. The fight still goes on and the enemy continues to fall back as fast as they can.

Wednesday July 2

Commenced raining last night & still continues this morning. Went down to the Reg: & found only 10 men in Company & they were worn out. Was on the battle field also & never saw such destruction before. Returned to Camp late at night & have caught the mumps.

Friday July 4th 1862

Got a good nights rest last night and rose early this morning feeling much better. Got breakfast & left for the Reg. 16 miles below and got to them about 1 P.M. found them all lazying round doing nothing except resting. No fighting going on to day but our forces are in pursuit of the Yankees. No National salutes have been fired by the Yankees as is their usual custom. Guess they are tired of listening to the roar of artillery for last ten days. Got a letter from A & wrote to her.

Saturday July 19th

Wagon went down below Seven Pines to a Yankee Hospital & got a fine lot of Ice. Had a lot of "Bust Head" Commissary Whiskey on hand & what a time we have had drinking Cock-tails Mint Jewlips and Ice water though no one got the least *tight*. fine day though warm.

Sunday July 20th

Spent the day in writing to Annie & enjoying the luxury of our fast melting Ice. The day has been quite pleasant, though

dull & loansome. Capt. Adams spent the day in Richmond & with the exception of some of the boys occasionally dropping in to get some *Ice*, I have been alone much to my gratification. Drilling for the day was dispensed with — many could be seen reading their Bibles, while others were whiling away the times in sleeping & writing to the loved ones at home. What a reformation fighting brings about in a Regiment and what a change has come over the spirit of the dreams of the 5th Ala since the Battle of Seven Pines.

Had a good dinner but its too far from home to relish it with any degree of satisfaction.

Monday July 21st

Have had occasional showers — pleasant — Been busy making out returns all day.

The roar of artillery has been sending forth its thunder peels all day, with short intervals, and for what purposes did not occur to me until dark, when I could see numerous sky Rockets going up in the City and other excessive demonstrations in fire-works. I recollected that it was the anniversary of the "Battle of Manassas." The cars on the York River R.R. also came by our camp from the White House with a full display of fire works.

[The last entry in volume one is dated August 14, 1862]

Friday Aug 15 1862

Got up at 3 A.M. & went down to the Regt on Picket 8 Miles below Camp, gave out rations and then went to a house, spent several hours in camp with some nice Ladies, got a good dinner for \$1 and then returned to Camp. Weather Cool & pleasant.

Sunday Aug 17 1862

Went down to the Regt on picket again and got back to Camp in time to partake of a good Dinner, then went to the Hospital in Town & found Tun [Tucker's brother] pitching into the Cakes & Jelly which Davis W. brought us from home. I pitched in & havent enjoyed any thing as much in a long while. Caught Cold & feel quite unwell.

Tuesday Aug 19 1862

The whole division was stired up 2 hours before day & took up the line of march at Sun up. Went through Town Called on Tun and found him doing finely. Took the Brook Turn-pike in the Northern suburbs of the Town & Bivouaced 8 miles from the City. Road was very dusty but we had a good time getting plenty of green Corn, apples, peaches, Melons, Chickens Eggs Cider &c &c. on the way.

Tuesday Aug 26 1862

Struck Tents, loaded wagons packed up & moved off at Sun up. Traveled all day nearly parell in with the Central R.R. crossing it every few miles and Camped in an old Field 2 miles north of "Beaver Dam Station" Walked all day & was tired enough to sleep quite soundly. Weather pleasant. Roads firm & free from dust.

Saturday Aug 30th

Took an early start Crossed the Rapidan River (the troops all wading across) and got to Culpper C.H. at 2P.M. Never have seen such destruction of property fences, farms & every thing in my life. Rode Over the Battle Fields of Cedar Mountain & saw any quantity of dead Yankee feet & heads sticking out of the ground, about half buried & causing the air to be filled with quite an unpleasant effluvia. The Town of Culpeper is much devastated but a pretty little place. Saw any quantity of sick and wounded Yankees in the place that Old Pope didnt have time to get away. Traveled on 4 Miles north of Town & camped on Mud Run.

Monday Sept 1 1862

Commenced traveling again early. Went by Warrenton Springs & took a good look round. Hotel burned and the place literally torn to peices. 5 miles farther on & we came to the little Village of Warrenton — decidedly the handsomest Town I've seen in Va. Came on through & got dinner at a private house and struck camp at Gainsville 8 Miles from Manassas. The Country north of Culpeper C.H. is quite broken though rich & pretty notwithstanding the Yankees have nearly destroyed every thing they could. The people rec'd us every where with demonstra-



tions of gladness, particularly the Ladies. Had a very hard rain in the evening & got gloriously wet.

Tuesday Sep 2 1862

Continued our Journey through a very pretty part of the Country. Went all over the Battle Field and never saw as many dead Yankees on a field before. Was at the store house where the 4th Ala fought on the 21 July 1861 when Bartow fell and nearly all over the old Battle Field. Camped at dark 10 miles from Fairfax CH on the Winchester Turnpike.

Wednesday Sept 3d

Cooked rations early & took up the line of March for Lusburg, passing through a delightful Country & passg through the Town after dark. The Moon shown brightly & the Ladies & Citizens crowded the side walks. Cheering us up & seemingly perfectly delighted to see us which was duely appreciated judging from the deafning yells that went up from each regt as they filed by. Went out 2 miles & camped for the night.

Friday Sep 5th

Our Regt & Brigade Crossed the Potomac just below the "Point of Rocks" early this Morning & were the first troops to make tracks on the soil of Md. I left after dinner Crossed over to the Regt and then Came back after the wagon train at Camp. riding all night & getting no sleep at all. and crossing back into Md.

Saturday Sep 6th. at sun up feeling as sleepy & hungry as a man well could feel. Took up the line of march for Frederick a distance of 15 ms from the Potomac & Camped in 4 ms of the Town. I rode in Town & saw a very pretty place. Got dinner on the way side at 2\$ and a very good one at that.

Friday Sep 12 1862

Took an early start this morning for Hagerstown but traveled very slow having quite a mountainous road to go over. Passed through Boonsborough early & found many warm Sympathisers in the place. Camped in 6 ms of Hagerstown. Expecting a fight and may remain here several days. Had another rain this evening.

Sunday Sep 14 1862

Was ordered off early this Morning back in the direction of Middletown where a hard fight is going on 9 AM — Genl Garland Killed early this morning. The 5th Ala ordered to the scene of action early in the morning. In the evening a general engagement commenced which resulted most disastrously to our arms. Our Brigade "cut all to pieces" & many of our men taken prisoners. Only 40 odd men to be found in the 5th at dark. at which time we commenced retreating leaving all our wounded in the enemy's hands. traveled all night long. The fight was at North Mountain 1½ miles east of Boonsboro from which I presume it will take its name. Never saw so much stragling in all my life.

Monday Sep 15th 1862

The army was halted 7 miles from Sparksburg & 3 from the Potomac and formed in line of Battle where they remained all day, having a little fight in the evening. Rode all day try to get provisions for the Men. Some of our Men came in. Harpers Ferry captured.

Tuesday Sep 16th

Jackson's Forces came up early this morning and in the evening a furious fight commenced which lasted only a short time.

Wednesday Sep 17 1862

The fight was opened this morning at day brake & an awful canonading continued on both sides until about 10 A.M. when it partially ceased & small arms took the place for a short time. The fight continued unceasingly & most furiously lasting the entire day & until 9 Oclk at night when all things quieted down except the rumbling of the ambulances, which were going all night. Great many wounded on our side but not many killed. Enemys loss not Known as boath parties held about the same position as when the fight commenced.

Thursday Sep 18 1862

All quiet to day except picket skirmishing. The army engaged

most of the day in burrying the dead. Wagons all crossed the Potomac into Va. Weather fine.

Friday Sep 19 1862

The whole army fell back last night several miles on the Va side of the River. Rode nearly all night long.

Saturday Sep 20th

Marched nearly all day. stoped at Smithfield got supplies & then travel all night long. camping Sunday Sep 21 5 miles north of Martinsburg at 10 am all worn out & as sleepy as possible to be. Got breakfast & slept until evening then got up & wrote to Annie.

Saturday Oct 25th

Struck tents this morning at day brake and started off in the direction of Charlestown. Got to the RR in the evening & Come'd tearing up the track. Troops worked all night and destroyed the road within 3 Miles of Harpers Ferry.

Monday Nov 24th

started at day-brake this morning & crossed the mountain which consumed the better part of the day. Walked 23 miles. camped near Chigleysville.

Sunday Nov 30th

Continued the march early this morning & camped at night near Spotsylvania C.H. all hands pretty well tired down.

Friday Dec 12 1862

The firing was renewed early this morning at Fredericksburg & later in the day at Port Royal. Continuing until late in the evening. Got orders at Sun down to go to Fredericksburg & had to travel all night long. through the Cold a distance of 16 Miles. &

Saturday Dec 13 1862

we halted at day brake to take a short rest preparatory to opening a general fight, which commenced about sun up &

continued the entire day in sight of Fredericksburg. our men getting much the best of the fight though the loss was heavy on both sides. Our Brigade was not engaged but were under fire for some time & several wounded. Went to the Depot.

Monday Feby 16 1863

Went to Frederiksburg to day and rode all over the place. Never looked at so dilapidated a place in my life. Houses burned down & Shot to pieces, furniture destroyed, fences burnt up & general destruction of every species. The Yankees were right on the opposite side of the river almost in stones throw of us with many of their huge Siegr pieces looking down upon the almost demolished old City.

Sunday April 11th 1863

Another dull week of inactivity has closed with nothing transpiring worthy of record. The weather has been warm & pleasant. Some little skirmishing has ocured along the line but not sufficient to indicate an early move on either side.

Wednesday April 29 1863

The Yankees Commenced Crossing the river this morning at day brake below Fredericksburg and our Army was very soon in motion. A general tearing up of winter quarters & throwing away old trinnpris [sp ?]. Were rumored near Hamiltons Crossing where we camped for the night. The Y——s kept Crossing all day & brisk skirmishing was kept up. Had a pretty hard rain in the evening which lasted most of the night.

Saturday May 2 1863

Train was ordered up above Spottsylvania C.H. where it Camped at night. A hard fight took place in the evening near Chandlersville.

Sunday May 3 1863

The fight was renewed this morning at day light & lasted until after 12 O'Clock, being a desperate fight all the time. The enemy was driven from every position with terrible slaughter

on both sides. Terrie wounded & taken prisoner. The Right was badly used up. went on the Battle field in the evening. Came back & wrote to Annie.

Tuesday May 5 1863

Removed this morning near Chancellorsville. Troops in line of battle all day but no fighting. Rained very hard in the evening & I got ringing wet. Still burrying the dead. Never saw as many wounded in all my life.

Tuesday June 9th

The Yankee Cavalry advanced this morning & a hard Cavalry fight took place, resulting in our men Driving them across the river at Beverlys ford. Infantry was all ordered up near the fight. Wagon train sent back to Culpeper & ordered up again in the evening to same Camp. Carter left us to go to Richmond.

Friday June 12

Took up the line of march early. Crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains & got to Front Royal in the Shenandoah Valley in the evening. Camped Near a little Town called Milwood.

Saturday June 13

Started again early this morning. passed through Smithfield & ran the Yanks out of Berryville where a large amount of Plunder was Captured. Pursued them until night & then Camped about 10 ms from Bunker Hill.

Sunday June 14

Had a dreadful hard march & reached Martinsburg at sun down and drove the Yankees out in double quick time. Capturing Several pieces of Artillery & a good many stores. Some of the women & Citizens were delighted to see us though the Town is rotten to the Core. Every where else we were greeted with the most enthusiastic welcome & in Smithfield in a substantial manner as the side walks were crowed with ladies dispensing Buttered Bread, Milk, Meat, Boquets &C. with lavish hands.



Friday June 19th

Got orders & left for Hagerstown early. Arrived there about 12M. Saw a good many *Sisih* women. Went 2 Miles out of Town & camped. Had a hard rain in the evening. Wrote to Annie at night.

Monday June 22

Got orders early this morning struck tents and left for Pa. Went through Hagerstown & large Crowds of people turned out to see us and many little *Sisish* flags were displayed Entered the state of Pa at Mutton Town at 12 O'Clock and got to Gruncastle in the evening & went into Camp.

Tuesday June 23d

Went out to the foot of the Allegany Mountains with a Squad of Cavalry after Beef Cattle and had a lively time. Men had all ran off & the women were scared to *death generally*. until they found they were not going to be interfered with. Got 100 head Cattle.

Saturday June 27th

Moved off early this morning. had a hard march and reached Carlisle at sun down all jaded & worried down. and Camped in the U.S. Barracks. A very nice Town but inhabited by very mean people.

Wednesday July 1 1863

This is to me the sadest day of the war. The troops marched to Geddysburg. where a terrible battle was fought in which poor Tunie [Tucker's younger brother] was Killed. Never shall I forget my feelings when I got to him & found him lifeless. How sudden & heartrendering the change. had parted with him only a few hours before in perfect health & fine spirits. Never dreaming that it was the last & final intermission. Thus ended the life of one of the Noblest & best boys in early youth that ever lived. & brings vividly to memory the fact that in "The Midst of life we are in Death.

Thursday July 2d

Was present at the burial this morning & saw him as decently

interred as possible. fixed a head board & marked the place of his burial. O! My. what an awful thought that his final resting place is so far from his devoted Parents. Bro & Sister and in a Yankee Country. (Direction — Buried one Mile north of Gettysburg on the west side of the Pike leading from Gettysburg to Middletown about 1½ mile West of said Pike. near a dirt road at the foot and running aprellel with a range of high hills right in front of a large *Red Barn*) Fight continues all day but now I feel perfectly indifferent as to the Result. all that was dear to me in this army is gone & I care not what the result is.

Friday July 3

Fight goes on. Thousands of our men killed & wounded.

Saturday July 4th

Fighting still Continues. Left Gettysburg this morning en route for Williamsport Md with the wagon train. Were intercepted on the Mountain & lost a good many wagons. Yankees Captured Westcott & a great many others. & never saw such a running of wagons riping generally.

Monday July 6th

Wagons continue to pour in and never saw such a crowd arrangement in all my life.

Tuesday July 7 1863

The same state of affairs whist to day. River high & every body badly scared. had a hard fight with the Cavalry who attempted to Capture the wagons. Lost several men but drove them back. Started at dark with the Com'y train, went to Hagerstown & Camped.

Sunday July 12th

Went into Town. Very dull day. Every one has a melancholly look. & very little to say. Every available house in the place is converted into a hospital & crowded with unfortunate victims. the slightly wounded being sent off as rapidly as possible across the river.

Monday July 13th

The army Crossed the Potomac back into Va. The river was pretty full. Nearly swimming to a horse and all the troops had to wade. Traveled all night long & the rain poured down in torrents all the time. had an awful night of it.

Sunday August 16 1863

Nothing of any importance whatever has transpired since my last memorandum. Remained a few days at Luray. From there we crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains at "Graves Gap" on the 29th July. Camped at Criglersville. a little Town at the foot of the Mountains in Madison County, for several days. From there we came to orange C.H. where we arrived on the 3d Inst. and where we now remain at this writing. Have had an exceedingly dull time. Mingled with an over abundance of Sorrow grief and loneliness. Have had no tidings from home in over 2 months. which adds much to the misery of my present Condition. Think a letter Certainly will come to hand soon. Cant be possible that I am to be kept in such suspense much longer. Have been ordered to report back to Co "D" but as yet, have not gone. Weath has been & still continues exceedingly warm & unpleasant. No indications of any movement of either army soon.

Wednesday Sept 23 1863

Days come and go, and with them nothing to relieve the dullness of the times. Left camp at orange CH on the 16th & came down on the Rapidan where skirmishing with the enemy has been going on ever since but no fight as yet. Got the news of Braggs fight in Tenn to day. Killing frost this morning. Wrote to Annie by Mat Jones.

Tuesday Oct 13 1863

Traveled on again to day, a *little* Cavalry fight took place on the Rapahammock. resulting in the Capture of several hundred Yankees. Some small arms & horses. Got a nice Burnside Carbine. Camped at Jeffersonton.

Saturday Nov 7th 1863

Yankees disturbed our quiet to day by shelling our Camps and

crossing the river. Captured nearly all of the 30th N.C. Right which was on picket at Kelleys Ford. Got orders & moved the train to Brandy Sta: where we stoped a short time. & then traveled all night long. Didnt get to close my eyes.

Sunday Novr 8th 1863

Traveled on to day until we crossed the Rapidan River at Rapidan Sta. then Camped until night when orders came to move down to Motons Ford, which required nearly all night and makes two nights that I have had no sleep at all. Got to our old Camp just at day brake.

Saturday Nov 28th

Position of affairs still the same. throwing up earth works. Moved back on the plank Rd. with the wagon trains.

[There are no entries from November 30th 1863 to May 22d 1864. Apparently one volume of Tucker's diary is missing.]

Monday May 23rd

Hooked up again early this morning & moved on to Taylorsville 1½ Miles south of Hanover Juntion & camped. Yankees have advanced to the North Anna & heavy skirmishing going on between the contending parties. Genl Lee fortifying and a fight is predicted to take place soon.

Sunday May 29th

Moved on early start this morning, passing north & in sight of Richmond & camped at Mecanicksville on the battlefield that opened the first, *series* of engagements around Richmond in 1862. and the plains all look quite familiar. No news from the *front*. more than skirmishing is going on & another battle expected to take place soon. Finished a letter to Walter also wrote to Annie. Weather clear & decidedly pleasant.

May 31 Tuesday

To day closes a month of Blood & carnage unequalled, perhaps in history, and still continues furiously. Have spent the day quietly at camp. Wrote to Parks Mark, Price & Ma.

## Friday June 3rd

Desperate fighting commenced at day-light & continued throughout the entire day. The canonading being exceedingly heavy, shaking the ground for miles around. The Yankees charged portions of the line as many as thirteen times but were repulsed in every attack with terrible loss. the ground being literally covered with their dead.

## Sunday June 5th

12M. Up to this time every thing remains very quiet. Not a gun having been fired — and it seems as though the two Commanders of each army, intend to suspend operations and properly observe the day. a slow constant rain has continued all the morning, with little prospect of it, ceasing to day. Night. Strange to say not a gun has been fired during the day and supreme quiet has reigned for the first sunday in many. Throughout our army religious services have been held along the lines. Spent the day in camp, having quite a dull time, the day being rainy and gloomy.

## Tuesday June 7th

Considerable artillery firing during the day in the direction of the lower James. Result unknown. It is reported that Grant is again changing his base and will probably pass to the South side of the James. Passed off the day in camp. Wrote to A.E.: and took a delightful bath in the Chickahominy: weather. Cool. clear & pleasant.

## Wednesday June 8th

The report of Grants change of base proves to be false. Sheridan starts on another raid & Hampton pursues. Some little fighting with unimportant results. Grant still continuing to fortify. Nothing further heard from Breckenridge or the valley command. Moved our Camp to the South side of the Chickahominy.

## Tuesday June 14th

Took a trip down to the front at Gains Mill & was astonished to see such extensive works. Every body had left & every



thing looked desolate. Got the news of Hamptons two days fight. Saturday and Sunday with Sheridan in which he gained a brilliant victory at Trevillian Depot 10 miles below Gordonsville. Nothing further heard from the valley.

#### Thursday June 16th

Passed a dull day in camp. Fighting going on near Petersburg but nothing Known of the result further than that the Yankees were repulsed with heavy loss. Nearly all of Grants forces have crossed to the South Side of the James river. doubtless for the purpose of trying to capture Petersburg and then advance upon Richmond from the rear.

#### Monday June 20th

Went to Petersburg to day on business of the ordnance dep't. Both Armies in line of battle near the Town & heavy canonading & skirmishing going on all the time. A good many Shells have been thrown into the City but very little damage done. Camped in an old field under a pine tree near the appomattox river.

#### Thursday July 14th

Wrote to Annie. & then spent the remainder of the day in reading a batch of Richmond papers. Firing heard at P———g yesterday proved to be a vigorous shelling of the City. resulting in considerable damage to the place. Weather quiet fine.

#### Saturday July 30

Was woke up this morning by the roar of artillery & small arms in the vicinity of P———g. The firing was *intensely* heavy & lasted until 10 A.M. at which time the Yankees who were handsomely repulsed & did not renew the assault again. A portion of our line had been undermined & was blown up at day break. Killing & wounding a good many of our men. which was followed by a disperate assault in which the Yanks gained a temporary advantage but were very soon driven back to their old position. where they were content to remain quiet for the remainder of the day. at least — leaving the ground literally covered with their dead & wounded. Went to

P————g & returned to the train 3 Miles south of the City where we camped at Poplar Spring Church for the night. a *terribly warm* day.

Sunday July 31 1864

Went to Dunloss Xing. passed through the Most exposed part of the City & found it much more damaged than I had been led to believe. Saw a good many of our wounded & several of our dead. that had been brought in. An intensely hot day. Shower of rain in the evening. Extremely quiet day on the lines.

Thursday Aug 4

One year ago to day. the March from Pa. was completed and Tents pitched at Orange CH. Many changing scenes have occurred during the time & many a noble spirit that was then buoyant with hope for the future has passed from the stage of action & been launched into eternity. through the instrumentality of a wicked & brutal war. but there is an abiding hope that their lives have not been laid down in vain. Had a good rain last night & to day is much more pleasant. Every thing continues dull & we are allowed to remain quietly in our pleasant camp.

Tuesday Aug 16th

Moved on early this morning in advance of the wagons. Crossed the Rapidan at Moretons Ford (the train crossing at Summer-ville) and got to Culpeper CH. at 12M. The Town and County generally was so badly used up I hardly knew any place that was once familiar and the people generally are in the most destitute circumstances. Wagons got in late in the evening & we immediately turned back toward Orange. Went down Near Raum Ford & spent the night at a Mr Smiths.

Saturday Sept 3rd

Rec'd the news of the nomination of Geo B McClellan & Geo H Pendleton at the Chicago Convention for President & vice President. The nomination considered a good one for the south & the ticket is expected to be elected in Novr but my opinion is it will be badly beaten. Rec'd a letter from Annie

& one from Ma.

Tuesday Oct 11

Quite an excitement raised at H'd qrs to day in consequence of orders having been rec'd to return all able bodied men to their companies. Creating quite a stir in every dep't. Nearly all will have to leave their easy & safe places in a day or so & return to the dangers of the battlefield. I endeavour to submit as philosophically as possible but at the same time would much prefer remaining. Weather has again turned warm with indications of more rain soon.

Monday Oct 17th

Spent the day in making a pair of Saddle Bags and other necessary arrangements to go to my Company as soon as the order comes for me but hope it may be delayed sometime. Considerable shelling along the picket lines this side of P————g during the day. otherwise every thing is quiet. Rec'd a letter from Walter containing a Photograph of Annie which I had written to him for.

Sunday Nov 27th

Another week has passed by without the occurrence of any thing of special interest. The weather during the week for the most part has been exceedingly Cold and disagreeable. Went to P————g yesterday. Have not written to Annie to day being the first sunday in many that I have failed to do so. but in view of Shermans position in Ga twould be useless as a letter would not reach Ala. Dont expect to hear from home again in a long while. Been busy all day writing up official Business.

Sunday Dec 4th

Nothing of any importance has occured since my last date. The demonstration of the Yankees only resulted in a raid on Stony Creek Depot on Thursday in which they were successful. capturing the Garrison. some 200 men. spiking 2 ps artillery destroying a small lot of Government supplies, one train of Cars and burning every building on the premises. after which they beat a hasty retreat before the "rebels" arrived on the

ground. Nothing definite has been heard from Ga further than Sherman is still advancing on Savannah & laying waste to the Country. A big fight is expected to take place soon and strong hopes are entertained for the ultimate capture or annihilation of his whole army but I fear he will get through without any serious injury or loss to his army. Communication is still cut off & another week rolls by without any tidings from home, another sunday passes & no letter is written to my Dear Annie. How long is such a state of affairs to exist?

Friday Dec 9th

AP Hill came up with his infantry Corps & a sharp fight ensued. the enemy immediately commenced retreating back to their lines and were closely pursued until dark. No general attack was made but heavy skirmishing was kept up all day. Damage done to the RR was slight. intensely cold day.

Sunday — Christmas

Went to Youngs Brigade this morning. Found nearly the whole concern drunk. Returned to camp wrote to Ma & Annie and spent the dullest Christmas day since I can recollect. Weather very disagreeable.

Sunday 1st

Cleared off last night & to day the sun is showing beautifully. Making every thing look cheerful & pleasant. Hope it may prove ominous of grand & glorious results to attend our arms and Country during the present year. May the present witness the end of this bloody strife with the independence of our Sunny land. Spent the day alone in camp. Wrote to Sister Francis.

Wednesday Feby 1st

Took the cars at 6 am. got to R—————d at 8 & spent the day Had a very dull time. spent the night at Ellisons

Sunday 5th

Went down to Stone Church 8 ms from Staunton and heard a good sermon from Rev Mr Boman who formerly preached in Greensboro. Came back & spent the night at the Hotel.

## Wednesday 8th

Cleared off last. Pretty day but for the Snow. Genl Lee & Staff left for Richmond with his command & so we will have to truge back down the country again very soon.

## Saturday 18th

Left R—————d and went out to Fitz Lee's H'd qrs on the nine mile road about 7 ms from town.

## Sunday 19th

Remained at H'd qrs all day with the blues. Shermans advance entirely cuts me off from getting or ever hearing from home for an indefinite period. The fall of Columbia & Charleston and the gloomy prospects generally are exceedingly depressing.

## Tuesday 28th

Got back to camp at Belfield. Rained all day & the roads were terrible bad.

[This is the last entry in Tucker's diary]



Journalistic Warfare: The *Atlanta Constitution*,  
the *Birmingham Age-Herald* and the Rube Burrow Interview

by

William Warren Rogers, Jr.

A sensational headline, "Rube Talks Constitution Man Tracks the Outlaw to His Lair," dominated the *Atlanta Constitution's* Sunday feature section on November 10, 1880. Habitual readers of the *Constitution* knew of Rube Burrow. The newspaper had given considerable coverage to the South's best known outlaw over the preceding two years. The interview, complete with sketches, had been conducted by a reporter named E. W. Barrett. An enterprising correspondent, Barrett had made his reputation the preceding election year covering the Washington political scene for the *Constitution*.<sup>1</sup>

Over in Alabama the *Birmingham Age-Herald* replied to the Georgia paper's scoop with a startling expose-style headline: "Buncombe: Biting at a Bogus Burrows." In scathing words the Alabama paper ridiculed Barrett's claim. A brief but vituperative newspaper war ensued between the two largest dailies in the neighboring states.<sup>2</sup>

Both of the metropolitan newspapers were among the foremost of Southern journals. The *Atlanta Constitution* had been founded in 1868 and still had the services of Managing Editor Henry W. Grady.<sup>3</sup> The *Birmingham Age-Herald* had begun in 1888 as a consolidation of two papers, the *Age* and the *Herald*.<sup>4</sup> Although the *Constitution* and *Age-Herald* were not rivals in

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<sup>1</sup>*Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1889. A number of "dime novels" were written about Burrow in the 1890s. The best of them is George W. Agee, *Rube Burrow, King of Outlaws and His Band of Train Robbers, an Accurate and Faithful History of Their Exploits and Adventures* (Chicago, 1890). A scholarly work is William Warren Rogers, Jr., "Violence And Outlawery In The New South: Rube Burrow's Train Robbing Days In Alabama, Mississippi, And Florida," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Auburn University, 1979.

<sup>2</sup>*Birmingham Age-Herald*, November 10, 1889.

<sup>3</sup>Louis Turner Griffith and John Erwin Talmadge, *Georgia Journalism 1763-1950* (Athens, 1951), 339-340.

<sup>4</sup>Rhoda Coleman Ellison, *History and Bibliography of Alabama Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century* (University, Alabama, 1954), 13.

circulation wars, each used the Burrow incident to build reader interest. Beyond that, a triumph scored against the other would build prestige over highly competitive journalistic rivals in Birmingham and Atlanta.

If the title of being the South's most prominent paper was debatable, the distinction of being the region's most prominent outlaw was not. Rube Burrow was, without contest, the most notorious fugitive from justice from Virginia to Texas. Rueben Houston Burrow, more familiarly known as Rube, was born in northwest Alabama's Lamar County sometime in 1854 or 1855. The fourth child of Allen and Martha Burrow, Rube grew up working on the family farm. By 1872 he was tired of the dull monotony and hard work on the farm. Like many Southern youths of the time, he was lured by stories of excitement and easy money in Texas. He and his uncle, Joel Burrow, left their impoverished Alabama neighborhood and headed West. Besides the legitimate avocation of farming and the less acceptable occupation of bartending, Burrow adopted another way of making a livelihood in Texas: train robbing.

In 1887 Rube returned to Alabama. Whether it ever occurred to Burrow to reform once back in his home state is not clear. If so, the thought quickly passed. Rube and Leonard Brock, a friend with Georgia connections, crossed into Mississippi and robbed a train at Duck Hill in December, 1888. In July, 1889, Rube killed a postmaster who refused to give him a disguise he had ordered by mail. The senseless murder provoked Governor Thomas Seay to send a militia company to Lamar County. Two months later Rube strayed from his native region with two comrades and held up a train at Buckatunna, Mississippi.

After the robbery at Buckatunna, Rube sought and found refuge in Lamar County. Interspersed with small farms and dominated by timbered hills and rocky ravines, Lamar County was sparsely populated and rural. In the Alabama of the 1880s blood ties transcended respect for the law when family members were threatened. Rube's numerous relations hid him, provided the outlaw with food, and warned their wayward kinsman when detectives entered the area. Lamar County was an ideal hide-out.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 3, 1889; Montgomery *Advertiser*, January 26, 1888.

Other than murder, the outlaw had confined himself to robbing trains. Railroads with their high rates and railroad officials with their arrogance were unpopular in the South. Burrow's bold and successful robberies made him a folk hero. The general public followed his exploits with interest and sympathy. After all, they reasoned, Burrow was only stealing from thieves. They liked his defiant style and enjoyed the frustration of the carrier lords.

It occurred to Correspondent Barrett that an interview with the outlaw would be of enormous interest. Burrow might be a criminal, but he was also a celebrity. In October, 1889, Barrett crossed into Alabama and traveled north to Lamar County. About that time, Rube was reported in nearby Blount County. Supposedly, Rube and a train robbing associate were cornered there and engaged in a running battle with lawmen. Barrett hastened to the scene.

In a staked-out farmhouse Barrett interviewed Henry Fischer, a Southern Express Company detective. During the course of the conversation with Detective Fischer, Barrett revealed his plan to interview the fugitive. After overcoming astonishment and doubt that the brash Barrett was in earnest, the detective was openly dubious. He described the outlaw as a man "shrewd though ignorant; brave, though vain; desperate though fond of notoriety," and as one always on the alert<sup>6</sup> Fischer doubted that the wary outlaw would consent to an interview. Still, he believed that Rube's consuming ambition was to become as famous as the western outlaws (Jesse James and Sam Bass) and the hero of dime novels. By touching Rube's vanity, Fischer speculated, he probably would talk at length. First, though, he would have to be convinced that Barrett really was a journalist, a man capable of immortalizing him, and not another masquerading detective.<sup>7</sup>

As events proved, Rube was not even in Blount County, but Detective Fischer's balanced remarks inspired the indefatigable Barrett. The interview with Fischer and other information he gathered enabled Barrett to evaluate Burrow as a man rather than as a fugitive. He returned to Lamar County

<sup>6</sup>Birmingham News, November 12, 1889.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

and got off the Kansas City, Memphis and Birmingham train at the small town of Sulligent. Without much difficulty he located Jim Cash, Rube's brother-in-law. Cash hesitated to cooperate until Barrett produced a letter of introduction from Congressman John H. Bankhead, a north Alabama solon and member of an influential family. Whatever Barrett's merits as a reporter were, he was both intrepid and resourceful. He convinced Cash to take him to Allen Burrow's country home. The inquisitive correspondent got first-hand information about Burrow during the rough seventeen mile wagon trip. Cash spoke of Rube's "good grit" and absolved him of past crimes.

At first Allen Burrow was wary of the stranger Jim Cash presented. Recently, detectives in all guises had infiltrated Lamar County. After consulting privately with Cash, Rube's father finally agreed to talk with Barrett. The unaffected, work-hardened Burrow praised his son as a boy who had been easy to raise. The elder Burrow regretted that Rube had been associated with some bad men in Texas but was adamant in denying that he had murdered anyone or had committed the various crimes attributed to him. Allen Burrow's defense was a classical apology for the prodigal son. When Barrett asked him if he had seen Rube recently, Burrow professed ignorance. No, he did not know where his son was.<sup>8</sup>

The entire interview and Barrett's impressions were published in a full-length *Constitution* feature the following week. Included in the story was an account of Burrow's life and crimes. The Atlanta paper's editors regretted that an interview with Rube had not been possible, but, considering the outlaw's reputation, they were relieved to see Barrett emerge alive from Lamar County. The return of the *Constitution's* journalist from the Alabama wilderness was "like the old Methodist preacher, who sent out his hat for a collection among the brethern and getting it back empty, still raised his hand in pious gratitude and said 'I humbly thank God for the return of my hat.'"<sup>9</sup>

Less than a week later, the undaunted Barrett returned to Lamar County. Inspired by the reader response and in the

<sup>8</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 3, 1889.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

best tradition of Richard Harding Davis, Barrett was tenacious in his quest for the story. He applied the theory of universal greed by offering \$200 to anyone who could arrange a meeting between him and the outlaw. Several Lamar countians interpreted Barrett's proposal as an easy way to make money. Reversing the classic situation of the city slicker victimizing the country bumpkin, the rural opportunists laid their plans. They arranged with a former deputy-sheriff, who both resembled Rube and knew his background, to talk with Barrett. In mock secrecy, the interview was elaborately staged in a desolate ravine. Barrett returned to Atlanta, sure that he had talked with the Lamar County desperado.<sup>10</sup>

Saturday afternoon newspapers in Birmingham announced at the Atlanta paper's request that a "Constitutional Special" would arrive the next morning (November 10) and provide citizens of the Magic City with "a full and interesting interview with Rube Burrows [*sic*]."<sup>11</sup> A special train, whatever its expense, would dramatize the *Constitution's* achievement. Despite earlier reports by the Birmingham *Age-Herald* that Barrett had been "used up by Cash" in Lamar County, it seemed that the correspondent's article would be a journalistic tour de force.<sup>12</sup> How, Alabamians wondered, had their own state's journalists managed to be so embarrassingly scooped? Where were the Montgomery *Advertiser*, the Mobile *Register*, and, more inexplicably, the Birmingham dailies?

If Barrett was convinced that he had interviewed the celebrated train robber, the Birmingham *Age-Herald* was not. The *Age-Herald* had learned the truth about Barrett's alleged interview from sources in Lamar County. The opportunity to upstage its Georgia counterpart was an open and irresistible invitation. The Alabama newspaper chartered a train to Atlanta and clandestinely sent a special edition of the *Age-Herald* to press. A skeleton *Age-Herald* staff loaded the freshly printed papers, climbed aboard, and the Georgia Pacific train departed for Atlanta at 2 a.m. Sunday morning.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 10, 1889.

<sup>11</sup>Birmingham *News*, November 9, 1889.

<sup>12</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 8, 1889.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, November 11, 1889



Meantime, in Atlanta some *Constitution* officials, E. W. Barrett, and nineteen carefully chosen newspaper boys, readied themselves for the five-hour run to Birmingham. At precisely 3:30 a.m. the bunting draped locomotive pulled out of the Forsyth Street crossing. A colorful sign emblazoned with the words "Constitution Special" hung from the side. The train slowly gathered momentum and soon reached a comfortable pace of fifty miles per hour. Inside, the pride of the *Constitution's* newspaper boys — Big Jay Bird, Roxie Calloway, Coon Reynolds, and others — finished sorting papers and caught some sleep.

At an unlikely time (dawn) and place (Tallapoosa, Georgia) the converging trains met. An impromptu and unexpected meeting occurred when the two cars stopped within six feet of each other at the Georgia-Pacific depot. Barrett expressed some surprise at discovering the *Age-Herald* contingent and its mission to Atlanta. Pleasantries but no papers were exchanged, the trains refueled, and the "race of news" continued.<sup>14</sup>

The Birmingham train reached its destination first, arriving in Atlanta about 7:30 Sunday morning. *Age-Herald* representatives immediately delivered a copy of their journal with the compliments of "Birmingham and Her Enterprising Paper" to the *Constitution's* downtown office.<sup>15</sup> Word quickly spread in the capital city, and citizens snapped up copies of the paper. The newspaper boys enjoyed the luxury of receiving as much as twenty-five cents a copy. Atlantians read with bemused curiosity the Birmingham paper's front page rebuttal. Crudely etched sketches mocking Barrett complemented the article and were the source of mirth. By ten o'clock the paper had sold out.

Before reaching Birmingham, the "Constitution Special" stopped briefly in Anniston, Alabama, to drop off three newspaper boys and one thousand copies of the *Constitution*. By the time the train arrived at Birmingham, a crowd had gathered at the depot. The newspaper boys never had such an easy

<sup>14</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 11, 1889; Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 11, 1889.

<sup>15</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 11, 1889.

time peddling their product. An observer commented that not even at election time had he seen papers go so fast. The gaily decorated car presented an incongruous splash of color in the drab grey of downtown Birmingham; reports estimating that 20,000 people milled around the car were exaggerated, but the crowd was large. Far from taking offense, Birmingham citizens patronized and welcomed the *Constitution*. Before the demand for papers was satisfied, the supply ran out.<sup>16</sup>

In the incredible episode's aftermath both the *Age-Herald* and the *Constitution* emphatically claimed victory. The bad editorial blood that already existed between the two journals added a tinge of acrimony to an affair that was largely humorous. "Birmingham is enjoying the novelty of a real Sunday newspaper," the *Constitution* chided.<sup>17</sup> The *Age-Herald*, in reprisal, advised the Atlanta paper to "shinny on its own side of the line," and "keep to its own territory in the future."<sup>18</sup> The Atlanta paper added that "it was worthwhile to come and see Birmingham even if they hand't got what they came for — a scoop on the *Age-Herald*."<sup>19</sup>

In Atlanta, the efforts of reporter Barrett drew unstinted praise. The *Constitution* maintained that the *Age-Herald* story only served "to advertise and to make more prominent Mr. Barrett's courageous and admirable piece of work."<sup>20</sup> Barrett, himself, acknowledged that the *Age-Herald* had come up with "quite an ingenious contrivance with which to shield themselves from the ignominy of being 'scooped' almost at home."<sup>21</sup> Had the Alabama paper missed an opportunity? Not according to its editors. "If such a thing as an interview with Rube had been possible, the *Age-Herald* would have had it long ago."<sup>22</sup>

Each paper remained convinced that it had prevailed over

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<sup>16</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 11, 1889; Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 11, 1889.

<sup>17</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 11, 1889.

<sup>18</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 10, 1889.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, November 11, 1889.

<sup>20</sup>Atlanta *Constitution*, November 11, 1889.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>Birmingham *Age-Herald*, November 10, 1889.

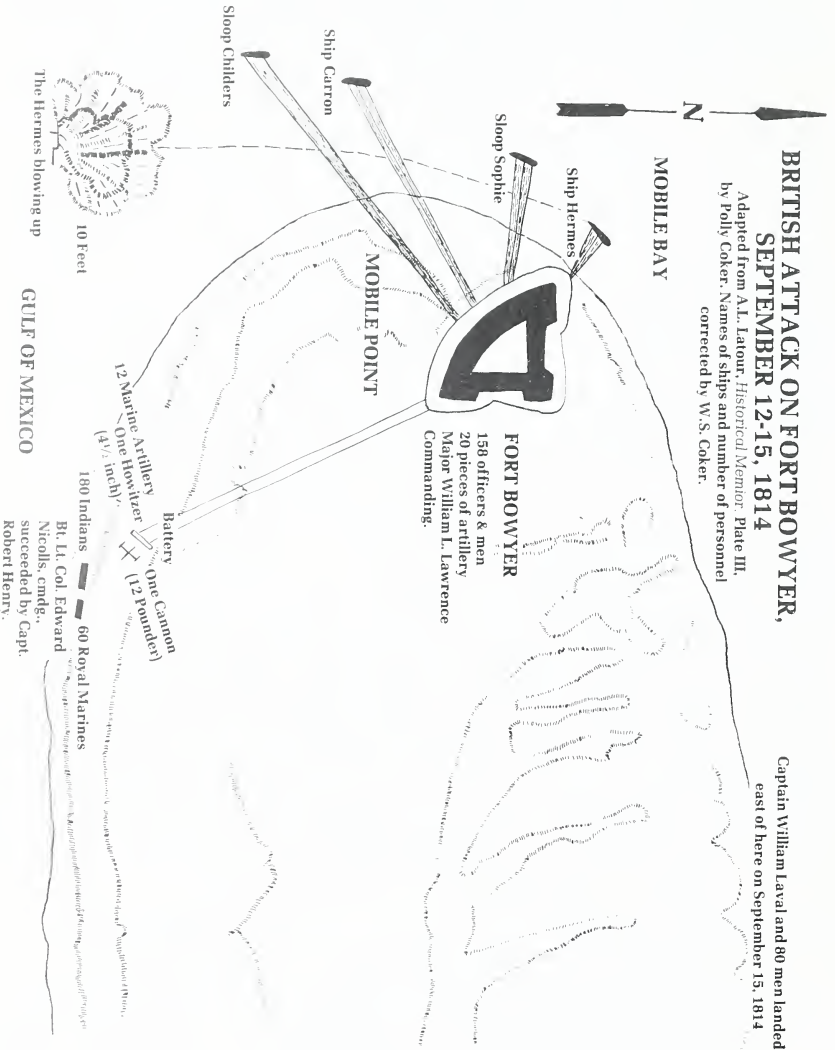
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the other. If the *Constitution* realized its folly, the paper never admitted it. E. W. Barrett's career did not suffer. An almost scoop was better than no scoop at all. The episode added up to a bogus interview, a newspaper war that briefly increased circulation for both papers, and the further spreading of Burrow's fame. There was also the enrichment by \$200 of some shrewd Lamar countians.

# BRITISH ATTACK ON FORT BOWYER, SEPTEMBER 12-15, 1814

Adapted from A.L. Latour, *Historical Memoir*, Plate III,  
by Polly Coker. Names of ships and number of personnel  
corrected by W.S. Coker.

Captain William Laval and 80 men landed  
east of here on September 15, 1814



## THE LAST BATTLE OF THE WAR OF 1812: NEW ORLEANS. NO, FORT BOWYER!

by

William S. Coker

I first became interested in Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point, now Fort Morgan, while collecting documents for the editorial project, "The Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company," later John Forbes and Company, for which I serve as director and editor.<sup>1</sup> After the United States occupied Mobile in April of 1813, the Army Quartermaster there purchased from John Forbes and Company office supplies and building materials: lumber, bricks, and tools which were used in the construction of Fort Bowyer.<sup>2</sup> I then read a number of accounts about Fort Bowyer and was surprised to learn that the battle for Fort Bowyer in February, 1815, was the last battle of the War of 1812. Later, when I mentioned that fact, several persons not only expressed surprise but asked, "Where is Fort Bowyer?" After that reaction, I decided to put the subject to further testing.

At several professional historical meetings within the last year or so, I casually mentioned that New Orleans was not the last battle of the War of 1812. Invariably those listening asked: "Well, if New Orleans was not the last battle, what was?" Such responses came from a wide range of historians. I then decided to see what the United States history textbooks had to say about it. A review of five different survey volumes revealed that only one even mentioned Fort Bowyer.<sup>3</sup> That

<sup>1</sup>William S. Coker, "The Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company," *Ex Libris* (Fall, 1978), II(2), 13-15.

<sup>2</sup>U. S. Army Quartermaster Accounts, John Wirt, 1813-1814 (Selected), National Archives Records Group 94, Washington, D. C.

<sup>3</sup>These particular volumes were chosen only because they were in my personal library. Richard B. Morris and William Greenleaf, *U.S.A. The History of a Nation*. (Chicago, 1969); Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *A History of the United States to 1877* (New York, 1968); Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*. (New York, 1950); Oscar Handlin, *The History of the United States*. (New York, 1967); and Richard Hofstadter, William Miller and Daniel Aaron, *The American Republic*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1959, 1964). Fort Bowyer is not mentioned in Wayne Andrews



reference was a note on a map which showed Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point and the date of the battle fought there as September 15, 1814.<sup>4</sup> This referred to the first battle for Fort Bowyer. Nothing was said about the second battle.

I quickly discovered that information in the surveys about the War of 1812 on the Gulf Coast was not only limited, but in several instances was in error. One textbook stated, "Aware that the British might use Pensacola in Spanish Florida as a base, Jackson invaded the area and burned the town."<sup>5</sup> That statement indicated the authors were not aware that the British were already using Pensacola as a base of operations, as they did in their first attack upon Fort Bowyer in September, 1814, but in addition, General Andrew Jackson did not burn the town. The British had threatened to destroy Pensacola when Jackson occupied it in November of 1814, but after firing a few shells into the city from their warships in the harbor, the British destroyed Spanish Fort San Carlos de Barrancas and the fort on Santa Rosa Island and then retired from the area.<sup>6</sup> Both forts were located some miles from Pensacola. But worse, one volume devoted to the War of 1812 referred to the second battle for Fort Bowyer and stated that the fort "meekly surrendered without a shot fired."<sup>7</sup> The authors failed to explain how fourteen persons were killed and twenty-eight wounded "without a shot fired." Even a comparison of the

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(ed.), *Concise Dictionary of American History* (New York, 1962), nor does it appear in David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>Morris and Greenleaf, *U.S.A.*, I, 388.

<sup>5</sup>Hofstadter, *et. al.*, *The American Republic*, I, 345.

<sup>6</sup>Andrew Jackson to Richard Sparks, Pensacola, November 9, 1814, Andrew Jackson Papers, Hermitage, Tennessee; John Innerarity to James Innerarity, Pensacola, November 10, 1814, Greenslade Papers, Florida Historical Society, Tampa; John Innerarity to John Forbes, Pensacola, May 22, 1815, Forbes Papers, Mobile Public Library, Mobile, Alabama; According to the Surveyor-General of West Florida, the British destroyed the "Military Post of Barrancas" and the "Fort of Santa Rosa" on the evening of 7 and the Morning of 8 November 1814. "Plano de la Bahía de Panzacola y sus inmediaciones" by Vicente Sebastian Pintado, Pintado Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington. See also William S. Coker, "John Forbes & Company and the War of 1812 in the Spanish Borderlands," in William S. Coker (ed.), *Hispanic-American Essays in Honor of Max Leon Moorhead* (Pensacola, 1979), 74-75.

<sup>7</sup>James Ripley Jacobs and Glenn Tucker, *The War of 1812: A Compact History* (New York, 1969), 186.

major monographs on the war revealed discrepancies and omissions regarding Fort Bowyer. But my topic is Fort Bowyer and only secondarily a critique of the histories of the war as they relate to that subject.

A few days after the surrender of the Spanish Fort Carlota at Mobile to the United States Army on April 15, 1813, General James Wilkinson visited Mobile Point, located some thirty miles southeast of Mobile. After he had determined that a fortification on the point could control access to Mobile Bay from the Gulf of Mexico, Wilkinson ordered nine of the heaviest cannon taken from the Spaniards to be moved there. Wilkinson then reconnoitered as far east as the Perdido River, but soon returned to Mobile Point, where aided by an engineer, a Monsieur Pilie, the General staked out a fort which he named Seraf.<sup>8</sup> Wilkinson remained there only briefly and by mid-May had departed for New Orleans,<sup>9</sup>

To complete construction of the fort, General Thomas Flournoy, who succeeded to the command at Mobile, ordered Colonel John Bowyer from the Perdido to Mobile Point, where he arrived on June 8, 1813. Bowyer commanded the fort for more than a year.<sup>10</sup> In November of 1813, news reached Bowyer that a British force had arrived at Pensacola. All available troops were rushed to Mobile Point in anticipation of a British attack. This was the occasion when British naval officers called at Pensacola and entertained some southern Indian chiefs, who petitioned them for uniforms, swords, and

<sup>8</sup>General James Wilkinson, *Memoirs of my own Times*. (Philadelphia, 1816; Reprint ed.; New York, 1973), I, 522-23; Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, edited by Charles G. Summersell (University, Alabama, 1976), 415, states that Wilkinson sailed for the mouth of the bay to look into the establishment of a fort on April 20. For a discussion of the topography and other physical details of the area see Major A. Lacarriere Latour, *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15*. A facsimile reproduction of the 1816 edition with introduction by Jane Lucas de Grummond (Gainesville, 1964), 30-32.

<sup>9</sup>James Wilkinson to General John Armstrong, May 15, 1813, Records of the Secretary of War, Letters Received, W-181(7) Inc. NARG 107.

<sup>10</sup>John Bowyer to Secretary of War, June 19, 1815, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered series, Microcopy M-221, reel 59, National Archives, Washington, D. C. This letter is a resume of Bowyer's military career and indicates that he served in the South from 1797 until 1814 and participated in most of the major events which took place there during those years. My thanks to Colonel Powell A. Casey of Baton Rouge for calling it to my attention.

commissions. The British remained there only temporarily on this visit.<sup>11</sup> In January of 1814, Major Barthelemy Lafon, an Army Engineer, noted the vulnerability of the fort to a land attack from the east, and recommended that steps be taken to remedy that situation. The following summer, perhaps because of Lafon's report and because it was believed that Fort Bowyer was indefensible, Flournoy ordered Colonel Bowyer to abandon the fort, to remove the troops, cannon, stores, and even the buildings, to Fort Charlotte [Carlota] at Mobile.<sup>12</sup> It might be added that the Secretary of War concurred in Flournoy's decision.<sup>13</sup> Bowyer had accomplished his mission by July 5, 1814, and left Mobile for Plattsburg, New York, and the northern theater of the war on August 24.<sup>14</sup> Thus the man after whom the fort was named did not have the honor of defending it when the British did attack.<sup>15</sup>

British strategy for their Gulf Coast campaign was sound: capture Fort Bowyer and Mobile, attract as many Indians and slaves to the British standard as possible, and march overland to Baton Rouge. There they could stop reinforcements and supplies from reaching New Orleans via the Mississippi River on the north. With a British fleet blockading the entrance to the lakes on the east and access to the Mississippi River on the south, New Orleans would be effectively isolated.<sup>16</sup> Jackson

<sup>11</sup>When the British arrived at Pensacola, Bowyer was in Mobile and received the news from a Captain Alexis commanding the Navy at Mobile Point. Alexis reported that seven sail, some brigs with 200 men aboard, and two bomb vessels had arrived at Pensacola, Bowyer to General [W. C. C.] Claiborne, November 26, 1813, *Ibid.*, reel 50; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Britain and the American Frontier 1783-1815* (Athens, 1975), 164. See also John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville, 1972), 341.

<sup>12</sup>B. Lafon to ?, Fort Charlotte, January 25, 1814, M-221, reel 63; Bowyer to Secretary of War, June 19, 1815, *ibid.*, reel 59.

<sup>13</sup>Armstrong to Jackson, July 2, 1814, in John Spencer Bassett (ed.), *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*. (Washington, 1926-1933), II, 14, 27n2.

<sup>14</sup>Bowyer to Secretary of War, June 19, 1815, M-221, reel 59.

<sup>15</sup>Some years later the fort was entirely rebuilt and was renamed for General Daniel Morgan of Revolutionary War fame, Earl Warren Stapleton, "A History of Fort Morgan, Alabama, from 1813 to 1864" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Alabama, 1950), 1; James Parton did not think the name change appropriate and wrote: "the fortification will be known to posterity as Fort Bowyer, though the name has since been most unpatriotically and immorally changed to Fort Morgan," *Life of Andrew Jackson*. (New York, 1861), I, 601.

<sup>16</sup>Proclamations of Sir Alexander Cochrane, Bermuda, April 2, July 1, 1814, War Office 1/143: 31, 70; Memorial of the Services of Major Edward Nicolls to Lord

constantly warned that if the British successfully carried out their plans, New Orleans and the entire countryside would be an easy conquest. Prize-money was the incentive as it had been in all amphibious operations recommended by the Royal Navy for over two centuries and New Orleans was the ultimate objective. There they expected to seize an estimated four million pounds sterling of commodities: cotton, sugar, tobacco, hemp, lead, and ships.<sup>17</sup>

But the consequences of a British victory on the Gulf Coast would be more far-reaching than prize-money. Between 1810 and 1813 the United States had annexed or occupied all of Spanish West Florida between the Perdido and Mississippi Rivers under the pretext that this area was included in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.<sup>18</sup> No modern historian would give any credence to such a claim, but during that era the march of Manifest Destiny was not to be impeded by any Socratic dialogue about the limits of the Louisiana Purchase. Since Great Britain and Spain were allies, the British were not expected to restore any of their conquests in West Florida to the United States, but would return them instead to Spanish

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Melville, May 5, 1817, War Office 1/144:196-98, Public Record Office, London. Good secondary accounts of British strategy on the Gulf Coast may be found in Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 160-65; Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago and London, 1965), 206-207; Marquis James, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (Indianapolis, 1938), 184; and especially Mahon, *War of 1812*, 341-43.

<sup>17</sup>Apparently Jackson did not address himself directly to this point until February of 1815, but all of his correspondence from the summer of 1814 on leaves no doubt about his sentiments on the subject, Jackson to James Monroe, New Orleans, February 18, 1815, Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 174. See for example, Jackson to Armstrong, Fort Jackson, August 10, 1814, and Jackson to Secretary of War, Mobile, August 30, 1814, *ibid.*, II, 26, 37. On New Orleans and prize-money see Colonel Sir Alexander Dickson, "Artillery Services in North America in 1814 and 1815," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* VIII (April, 1929), 83-84.

<sup>18</sup>Isaac Joslin Cox, *The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813* (Reprint ed.; Gloucester, Mass., 1967), 312ff. In 1813-1815 Fort Bowyer was located in Mobile County, Mississippi Territory. Although the United States did not occupy Mobile until April 15, 1813, Governor David Holmes of the Mississippi Territory had created Mobile County on August 1, 1812. It included the territory south of the 31st parallel lying between the Perdido and Pearl Rivers, Clarence Edwin Carter (ed.), *The Territorial Papers of the United States: Mississippi* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934-62), VI, 305-06. Of course, Spanish officials protested such action and Spain continued to claim the area as a part of Spanish West Florida until she ceded the Floridas to the United States in 1819, Cox, *West Florida*, 605, 654-55.



control.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in a real sense the fate of the Gulf Coast was at stake, and Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point was the key to British plans. If Fort Bowyer fell, the history of Fort Charlotte at Mobile indicated that it would not offer much opposition to an invading army. The vulnerability of that fort had forced the British to surrender it to the Spanish in 1780 after only a token battle, and the Spanish in turn, had given it up without a fight to the Americans in 1813.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in the summer of 1814, Captain Sir William H. Percy of His Majesty's Navy, and brevet Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicolls of the Royal Marines, laid their plans to capture Fort Bowyer.

The British were not very secretive about their intentions. Before Nicolls left Havana for Pensacola, word had reached Mobile that it was to be attacked.<sup>21</sup> Even before such news arrived, the inhabitants of Mobile met on July 20, 1814, and appointed commissioners to communicate with General Jackson to complain about the abandonment of Fort Bowyer and the defenseless state of Mobile.<sup>22</sup>

In August, before he left Fort Jackson for Mobile, Jackson ordered Colonel Richard Sparks at Mobile to restore Fort Bowyer. When he arrived at Mobile on August 22, Jackson met Major William L. Lawrence as the Major was preparing to go to Mobile Point with a force of 160 men.<sup>23</sup> Jackson knew that the British expected to be in possession of Mobile within a month.<sup>24</sup> During the next few weeks Lawrence and

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<sup>19</sup>Major Howell Tatum, who was with General Jackson, recorded that they anticipated a joint Anglo-Spanish attack to recover that part of West Florida occupied by the United States, in order to return possession of it to the Spanish government, John Spencer Bassett (ed.), "Major Howell Tatum's Journal while Acting Topographical Engineer (1814) to General Jackson," *Smith College Studies in History* VII (1921-1922), 62.

<sup>20</sup>Major Tatum claimed that Mobile was incapable of defense, and that for its safety they must rely on its outposts, Bassett, "Tatum," 63; Mahon, *War of 1812*, 347. On the British surrender of Mobile in 1780, see J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels* (Gainesville, 1976), 161-74. On United States occupation of Mobile in 1813 see among others, H. Wesley Odom, Jr., "Cayetano Perez and the Fall of Mobile" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of West Florida, 1977), 49-66.

<sup>21</sup>James, *Jackson*, 184.

<sup>22</sup>Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 14nl.

<sup>23</sup>Bassett, "Tatum," 51; Coles, *War of 1812*, 203.

<sup>24</sup>Jackson to Col. Robert Butler, Mobile, August 27, 1814, Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 32. See also Jackson to Sparks, Mobile, August 27, 1814, Jackson Papers, Hermitage, Tennessee.



his men worked feverishly to reconstruct the fort and to prepare it for the anticipated attack. Cannon from the fort soon controlled the water passage to Mobile, but the fort was not constructed to sustain a land attack from the east.<sup>25</sup> Thus the problem which Major Lafon had noted earlier had not been corrected in the construction of the new fort. Lawrence gained a few days respite when Captain Percy delayed the attack on Fort Bowyer while he sent an officer unsuccessfully to enlist the services of the pirates of Barataria.<sup>26</sup>

In the meanwhile, Colonel Nicolls, who had arrived in Pensacola, confided his plans to attack Fort Bowyer to the Spanish Governor Mateo Gonzalez Manrique, who, in turn, revealed them to his confessor, Father James Coleman. Coleman lost no time in telling the merchant John Innerarity, who headed John Forbes and Company in Pensacola. Innerarity feared for the safety of the company property at Bon Secour, not far from Mobile Point, and the extensive company interests at Mobile managed by his brother, James. Innerarity also resented the fact that earlier that year the British had forced the company employees at Prospect Bluff on the Apalachicola to abandon the trading post there, had refused to return nine company slaves who had taken refuge in the recently constructed British Fort near the store, and had detained a herd of more than 200 head of company cattle to feed their Indian allies in West Florida. Even though Innerarity was a Scotsman and was expected to be an ally of Colonel Nicolls, he sent a rider — Paul Revere style — by the name of McVoy to warn the commander at Fort Bowyer that the British were coming. Nicolls discovered what Innerarity had done and quickly ordered several Marines and a number of Indians to give chase. McVoy abandoned his horse in the swamps and managed to reach Fort Bowyer one jump ahead of his pursuers. Although

<sup>25</sup>Col. Thomas L. Butler to Lawrence, Mobile, September 5, 1814, Jackson Papers, Hermitage, Tennessee. In this letter Butler advised Lawrence that if a land force appeared in the rear of the fort, he was to fire two minute guns of the longest caliber to warn Jackson to come to the fort's assistance. Lt. Col. W. Lawrence to A. J. Dallas, New Orleans, April 25, 1815, M-221 reel 63.

<sup>26</sup>Captain Nicholas Lockyer to Captain Percy, September 11, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, f.81; Jane Lucas de Grummond and Ronald R. Morazon, *The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1961), 37-41, 53; Mahon, *War of 1812*, 348; Coles, *War of 1812*, 204; Reginald Horsman, *The War of 1812* (New York, 1969), 226, 233.

they knew that the Americans were forewarned, the British decided to attack anyway.<sup>27</sup>

The British forces employed in this attack included four ships, with a combined total of seventy-eight cannon and 600 men. Their land party consisted of sixty royal marines, twelve marine artillery, and 180 Indians with two cannon.<sup>28</sup> The American force at Fort Bowyer, which amounted to 158 men and officers with twenty pieces of artillery, faced a combined British sea and land force of 852 men and eighty cannon.<sup>29</sup> Although Lawrence and his men agreed to fight until further resistance was futile, there is no justification for the claim

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<sup>27</sup>Nicolls to Cochrane, undated, but ca. March 1816, WO 1/144:72-73, PRO, London; Edmund Doyle to [John Innerarity], Prospect Bluff, July 4, 16, and 22, 1814, Greenslade Papers, Florida Historical Society; Doyle to Captain R. C. Spencer and Robert Gamble, Prospect Bluff, April 6, 1815, Forbes Papers, Mobile Public Library, Mobile. For a convenient summary of the charges and countercharges between Innerarity and Nicolls, see Coker, *Hispanic-American Essays*, 69-72.

<sup>28</sup>Figures on the number of British and American troops involved vary widely. Latour stated that the British landed 600 Indians or Spaniards and 130 marines, *Memoir*, 34. There were no Spaniards in the landing force. Lawrence reported the landing party consisted of 400-500 men, Jackson to Lt. Col. Thomas H. Benton, Mobile, September 13, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 48. Horsman gave the number as sixty marines, twelve marine artillery, and 130 Indians, *War of 1812*, 232. Captain Percy advised Admiral Cochrane on September 9 that Nicolls had volunteered to go on the expedition with forty marines, twenty marine artillery, 130 Indians and a howitzer, Percy to Cochrane, Pensacola Bay, September 9, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, folios 74-80, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Several years later Colonel Nicolls wrote that the force consisted of sixty royal marines, twelve marine artillery and 180 Indians, Nicolls to Lord Melville, May 5, 1817, WO 1/144:196-98, PRO, London. Captain Robert Henry's report on the land force does not mention any specific number of troops involved, Captain Robert Henry to Lt. Col. Nicolls, Pensacola, September 20, 1814, Cochrane Papers Ms. 2328, NLS. Because Nicolls commanded the land force until he became ill, I have elected to use his figures even though his report came several years after the event.

<sup>29</sup>American strength reports ranged from 130 to 158 officers and men. Compare Latour, *Memoir*, 34, and Jackson to Monroe, September 17, 1814, Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 50-51. Jackson also reported the British force consisted of 110 Marines and 200 Creek Indians and twenty artillerists. Jackson indicated that Captain [George] Woodbine commanded the land party, but it is clear from Captain Henry's report that he, and not Woodbine, was in overall charge. Woodbine undoubtedly commanded the Indian contingent which may have already been incorporated into the 1st Battalion, Royal Colonial Marines, Nicolls to the Commissioners for Vivualling His Majesty's Navy, Pensacola, October ?, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, f. 102.

that they adopted the motto "DON'T GIVE UP THE FORT!"<sup>30</sup>

Percy landed the marines and Indians about nine miles east of the fort on September 12. Contrary winds prevented the ships from attacking the fort until the 15th. Finally, on the afternoon of the 15th, the ships began their attack. During the subsequent artillery duel between the fort and the ships, the *Hermes*, its bow spring cut by a cannon shot, drifted within close range of the fort. Intense fire from Fort Bowyer severely damaged the ship. Captain Percy managed to move the *Hermes* out of range of the fort's cannon, but he soon abandoned it and set the ship on fire. It burned until about 10 p.m., when the fire reached the powder magazine and the *Hermes* blew up with a tremendous explosion, which was heard by Jackson in Mobile. In the meanwhile, the British land force, commanded by Captain Robert Henry — Colonel Nicolls had become ill and had been taken aboard the *Hermes* — had moved within 800 yards of the fort on the 14th but retreated when the fort began returning their fire. On the 15th, the land force again approached the fort and fired its cannon and howitzer until there were only three rounds left. They then advanced even closer, expecting to cooperate with a landing party from the ships with scaling ladders, but when they noted the *Hermes* had been abandoned, they retreated dragging their howitzer with them.<sup>31</sup> Jackson, who had been enroute by schooner to the fort to inspect it when the action commenced, returned to Mobile and sent eighty men under Captain William Laval to reinforce Major Lawrence. But they could not land during the heat of the battle and retired to a point a few miles east of the fort. When the *Hermes* exploded, Laval thought the explosion came from the fort. He returned to Mobile and advised Jackson that the British had captured

<sup>30</sup>Stapleton, "Fort Morgan," 11, makes this claim as does Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (Boston, 1897), 379. Stapleton cites Latour, *Memoir*, 35-36, but nowhere in Latour does he make such a statement. Hamilton provides no documentation for his statement, but obviously used Latour.

<sup>31</sup>This brief account of the battle merely touches the highlights and follows the reports of Captain Percy, Percy to Cochrane, September 16, 1814; and Captain Henry, Henry to Nicolls, September 20, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, NLS. Major Lawrence's report agrees in most details with the reports of Percy and Henry, Lawrence to Jackson, September 15-16, 1814, in S. Putnam Waldo, *Memoirs of Andrew Jackson* (Hartford: Roberts & Burr, 1818), 165-68. For additional details of the battle see Bassett, "Tatum," 56-57.

Fort Bowyer. Jackson determined to retake the fort and was making preparations to do so when he received word that the fort was safe and that the British force had retreated.<sup>32</sup> Jackson was estatic and proclaimed: "The gallant Lawrence, with his spartan band, has given them [the British] a lecture that will last for ages."<sup>33</sup> The box score of this battle for Fort Bowyer read: twenty-three British killed and forty-seven wounded with ten later dying of their wounds; four Americans killed and five wounded.<sup>34</sup> Colonel Nicolls, who

<sup>32</sup>After Jackson met the officer dispatched by Lawrence to warn of the expected attack, Jackson ordered his schooner returned to Mobile. Because of contrary winds, it took fourteen hours for Jackson just to reach the mouth of Dog River, nine miles below Mobile. It was not until the night of September 14 that he finally arrived in Mobile, Thomas L. Butler to Lawrence, Mobile, September 14, 1814, Jackson Papers, Hermitage; Bassett, "Tatum," 55-56; James, *Jackson*, 189-90. If Lawrence had fired the predetermined signals no mention was made of it. The strong northern winds, however, would have prevented them from being heard very far to the north. Several men disagreed with Laval's report that the fort had blown up, claiming that it had been the British ship instead, Bassett, "Tatum," 58; Jackson to Col. Robert Butler, Mobile, September 17, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 49-50.

<sup>33</sup>Proclamation by Andrew Jackson, Mobile, September 21, 1814, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XVI. See also Jackson to Monroe, Mobile, September 17, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 50-51.

<sup>34</sup>Casualty figures vary widely; Latour, *Memoir*, 40, reported 160 British killed on the ships and two on land, and seventy wounded; while Horsman, *War of 1812*, 233, lists thirty-two killed and thirty-seven wounded and reports no land casualties; Wilburt S. Brown, *The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815* (University, Alabama, 1969), 45, gives twenty-seven killed and forty-five wounded and does not indicate whether they were sea or land casualties; James, *Jackson*, 816n8, gave thirty-two killed and forty wounded without distinguishing land or sea.

Captain Percy's casualty report indicated that there were seventeen killed and twenty-five wounded on the *Hermes*, five killed and seventeen wounded on the *Sophie*, and five wounded on the *Carron*. Of this number five from the *Hermes*, four from the *Sophie*, and one from the *Carron*, who were severely wounded, died within a month after the battle. I am indebted to Dr. Larry Owsley of Auburn University and Dr. William S. Dudley of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D. C., for the shipboard casualty report and for the figures of those who died after the battle. See Percy to Cochrane, September 16, 1814, Admiralty 1/505, Part 2 of 5, pp. 321-23, PRO, London; Henry to Nicolls, September 20, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, NLS, indicated only one of the land party killed and listed no wounded which when added to Percy's figures gives a grand total of twenty-three killed and forty-seven wounded with ten later dying from their wounds.

While the reports on American casualties also vary, I have used the figures rendered by Major Lawrence in his report of the battle, Lawrence to Jackson, Fort Bowyer, September 15-16, 1814, in Waldo, *Jackson*, 166. Lawrence also reported



was thrice wounded and lost an eye in the battle, blamed their failure to capture Fort Bowyer upon "that villain," John Innerarity.<sup>35</sup>

On their retreat overland from Mobile Point, the Indians and their British accomplices sacked the Forbes company store at Bon Secour and made off with all of the equipment, supplies, cattle, horses, and ten of the company slaves. In all the company losses amounted to \$5,890.<sup>36</sup> Jackson ordered two infantry detachments to cut off the retreating British force, but they arrived too late to accomplish their mission.<sup>37</sup>

Lawrence's victory at Fort Bowyer greatly boosted the morale of the Americans on the Gulf Coast and gave a severe shock to the British. The strategic importance of the victory was very significant.<sup>38</sup>

The British failure to capture Fort Bowyer did not force them immediately to give up the idea of taking Mobile. In fact, it was not until after Jackson chased the British out of Pensacola in November of 1814 that the British commanders lost interest in such a campaign and changed their strategy for

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that a Captain Walsh and several men (Bassett, "Tatum," 57, gives the figure as 10-12 men) were burned by an accidental explosion of some cartridges inside the fort, *ibid.*, 168.

<sup>35</sup>Nicolls to Lord Melville, May 5, 1817, WO 1/144:196-98, PRO, London.

<sup>36</sup>John Innerarity to Mateo Gonzalez Manrique, Pensacola, October 28, 1814, Green-slade Papers, Florida Historical Society; Nicolls to Mateo Gonzalez Manrique, Pensacola, October 22, 1814, Forbes Papers, Mobile Public Library, Mobile; Mateo Gonzalez Manrique to Ruiz de Apodaca, Pensacola, October 30, 1814; and [John Innerarity] to [John Forbes], Pensacola, November 2, 1814, Cruzat Papers, Florida Historical Society; Richard S. Lackey (Comp.), *Frontier Claims in the Lower South . . . During the War of 1812* (New Orleans, 1977), 25-28, 42-44. Captain Henry's report indicates that when he reached Bon Secour on September 17, he found Lieutenant Castle and a detachment of Indians already occupying the site. Henry's party killed two bullocks and ordered some flour. When they marched out that afternoon, Henry stated that they took with them ten black men who had volunteered their services, stating that they belonged to a Mobile merchant. They reached the Perdido on the 18th and Pensacola on the 19th of September. Henry to Nicolls, Pensacola, September 20, 1814, Cochrane Papers, Ms. 2328, NLS. Obviously, the ten blacks were the property of John Forbes and Company.

<sup>37</sup>Bassett, "Tatum," 63-64

<sup>38</sup>Claiborne to Jackson, New Orleans, September 20, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, VI, 441-42; Jackson to Monroe, Pearce's Stockade, October 26, 1814, *ibid.*, II, 83; Horsman, *War of 1812*, 233.



the attack upon New Orleans.<sup>39</sup> This is not the place to relate the details of the Battle of New Orleans; that story is well known. Unfortunately, many accounts of the War of 1812 end with the great American victory there on January 8.

In spite of Jackson's concentration upon the defenses of New Orleans, he had not neglected Fort Bowyer. In November of 1814, after his victory at Pensacola, Jackson reinforced Fort Bowyer to such an extent that he predicted "that ten thousand troops cannot take it."<sup>40</sup> It is obvious that Lawrence's successful stand there in September had deluded Jackson into believing that Fort Bowyer was now virtually invincible. Although the figures are not available, it appears that Jackson probably increased the size of the garrison to nearly 400 men. Although thankful for the reinforcements received, Lawrence, now a brevet lieutenant colonel, in December of 1814, warned General James Winchester, commanding at Mobile, of the land mounds to the east of the fort which could provide cover for an enemy. He pointed out that the rear or land side of the fort was not constructed to be defended from that direction. As a result, General Winchester promised protection on the land side if he received timely notice.<sup>41</sup>

Even after Jackson reached New Orleans, he did not lose sight of the importance of Fort Bowyer. Before the battle for New Orleans, he had warned General Winchester to send sufficient supplies to the fort. "Mobile Point," he wrote, "must be supported and defended at every hazard."<sup>42</sup> On January 30, three weeks after the battle at New Orleans, Jackson wrote Winchester that he had no idea if the enemy would attack

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 233; Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 74.

<sup>40</sup>Jackson to General James Winchester, Mobile, November 22, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 106.

<sup>41</sup>Lawrence to A. J. Dallas, April 25, 1815, M-221, reel 63. Major Tatum had suggested a plan to provide some protection to the fort from the land side. He thought that the highest sand mound to the rear of the fort should be fortified and that a large well-armed ship should be stationed in Navy Cove, northeast of the fort. Such a vessel could prevent the enemy from sending landing parties by barge from Dauphin Island, and its guns could clear the enemy from behind the fort if he approached by land, Bassett, "Tatum," 60. Jackson also thought such a vessel stationed in Navy Cove would protect the rear of the fort and strongly urged the Secretary of War to furnish the ship, Jackson to Monroe, New Orleans, December 10, 1814, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 111-12.

<sup>42</sup>Parton, *Jackson*, II, 56.

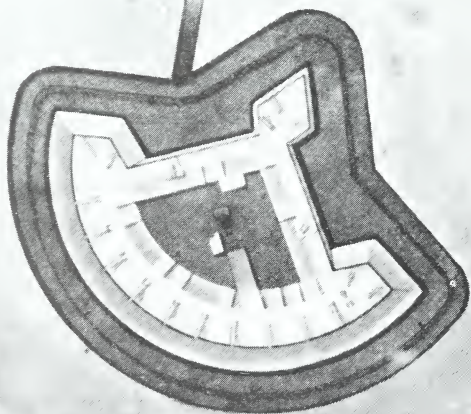
Fort Bowyer, but advised that "you cannot be too well prepared or too vigilant — adm. Cochrane is sore, and Genl. Lambart crasy [*sic*], they may in this situation attempt some act of Madness — if their Panic does not prevent it."<sup>43</sup>

The last shot at New Orleans had hardly been fired, when the British moved a naval force up the Mississippi and began bombarding Fort St. Philip. After ten days of intense bombardment, the British failed to reduce the fort, and they retired on January 18.<sup>44</sup> British pride was now on the line and they determined to avenge their losses. By January 28, they had decided to land on Dauphin Island to reorganize the army, and had also decided that Fort Bowyer must be taken. After that, a decision would be made regarding Mobile.

Bad weather delayed British plans for at least a week. On the evening of February 6, a line of battleships and other vessels anchored off Dauphin Island. The following day the 1st and 3d Brigades, the 85th Regiment, and others landed on the island while the 2d Brigade prepared to take up its position several miles east of Fort Bowyer. At the same time thirty-eight ships of the line also took up their positions and sealed off the sea approaches to Mobile Point from the north, south, and west. On February 8, the 4th, 21st, and 44th Foot of the 2d Brigade composed of about 1,300 or 1,400 men along with supporting artillery and engineers disembarked about three miles from the fort. Major General John Lambert and several officers inspected the fort from a safe distance and concluded that an infantry assault was impracticable but agreed that artillery could reduce the fort with a minimum of risk. By nightfall the British had begun trenching operations near the fort. The guns from the fort — there were only seven cannon mounted on the rear — fired at these men, whose dark bodies were easily distinguished against the white sand, killing eight or ten and delaying the digging of the trench. Several other British soldiers had also been killed and wounded as they moved towards the fort. On the 9th the fort continued a heavy fire towards the rear at anything that moved and man-

<sup>43</sup>Jackson to Winchester, New Orleans, January 30, 1815, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 155.

<sup>44</sup>Report by Major W. H. Overton, Ft. St. Philip, January 19, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XXXIV.



Mobile Point—1815. Plan and two sections of Fort Bowyer showing positions of guns by Charles R. Scott, Royal Staff Corps. MPH 73(3), W.O. 1/141, p. 253, courtesy of the Public Record Office, London.

aged to disable several artillery carriages. In order to counter this, the infantry pushed close to the fort and protected by sand dunes, began an intense and well-directed musket fire that nearly silenced the fort's cannon. That night Colonel Lawrence's men piled sandbags on the rear parapets as cover for their muskets and made sandbag embrasures for their cannon. Earlier that same day, the British artillery officers had selected the sites for their cannon and had begun work to ready them for the big guns.

A lively exchange of musketry occurred all during the day of the 10th. The British moved the 85th Regiment, consisting of the 85th Light Infantry and the 95th Riflemen, with about 700 men from Dauphin Island to their assembly area east of the fort. This enabled the 44th Foot to move into position nearer the fort. On the night of the 10th the trench near the fort was extended to within forty yards or so of the counter-scarp. Early the next morning, the British moved their artillery into position as additional artillerymen and a rocket detachment with 100 twelve pound rockets were brought over from Dauphin Island. The stage was set and the British planned to open a devastating artillery barrage at 10 a.m. on the 11th.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup>This account is based upon General Lambert to Earl Barthurst, Isle Dauphine, February 14, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix No. LXVI; and especially Dickson, "Journal," 178, 213-27. See also Latour, *Memoir*, 207-15. Latour's figures for the number of British troops landed on Mobile Point, 5,500 or more, are questionable, although in all fairness to Latour there are no accurate or reliable figures. Utilizing the strength figures from Dickson's "Journal," 86, 214, and 222, and the strength and casualty figures from Latour's *Memoir*, Appendix, Nos. LXIV and LXVI, and Plate IX, I have attempted to provide a better estimate of the British forces investing Fort Bowyer by land in February, 1815.

*No. of Troops*

2d Brigade — 4th, 21st, and 44 Foot — Jamaica, November, 1814	2,535
[Latour lists 2,500 present at New Orleans]	
Casualties of 2d Brigade at New Orleans including killed, wounded and missing in action	1,187
Total after Battle of New Orleans	1,348
Seaman on shore Mobile Point, February 10, 1815	200
Royal Artillery strength ready for the attack on February 5, 1815	153
85th Regiment — 85th Light Infantry and 95th Riflemen less Captain Lane's Rocket Brigade — at Jamaica	944
[Latour lists 1,150 at New Orleans]	



As these events unfolded, inside the fort, Lawrence had an effective force of 320 out of a total of 375 officers and men. But in addition, there were twenty women, sixteen children, and three servants. All preparations within the fort were completed, except that there was no casement or bomb shelter for the protection of the dependents, the sick, and the wounded.<sup>46</sup> On February 6, when Lawrence first became aware of the enemy's intentions, he had notified General Winchester in Mobile. Winchester received the request for assistance on the 7th, but it was not until the 10th and 11th that he sent reinforcements under the command of Major Uriah Blue across the bay to divert the British. The detachment landed at little Bay John about nine miles east of the British position. Shortly after the landing, the British captured Blue's three schooners, but Blue in reply took a British barge with seventeen seamen.<sup>47</sup>

Casualties of 85th Regiment at New Orleans including killed, wounded and missing in action .....	231
Total after Battle of New Orleans .....	713
Miscellaneous engineers including sappers, etc. on Mobile Point generously estimated at .....	586
Total estimated British strength on Mobile Point .....	3,000
Thus I believe the number of British troops present was about 3,000 as compared to the 5,500 or more given by Latour.	

<sup>46</sup>Again strength figures within the fort are confusing. Several accounts list sixteen officers, sixteen sergeants, sixteen drummers, and 327 rank and file, for a total of 375, Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 381-83; Stapleton, "Fort Morgan," 23. Latour, *Memoir*, 214, stated that there were only 320 fit for duty. General Winchester reported that there were "about" 360 officers and men there, Winchester to Secretary of War, Mobile, February 17, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix XXXIX. After the battle, the British listed 366 prisoners, Jackson to Governor David Holmes, New Orleans, February 21, 1815, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 178. No combination of figures, including the one person killed in the fort, totals 366. The lack of a casement or bomb shelter was a serious deficiency, Latour, *Memoir*, 33. A British officer present at the battle noted the absence of the bomb shelter to protect the inhabitants and wrote that some were even sleeping in tents, The Author of the Subaltern, *The Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans, in the Years 1814-1815* (London, 1827), 360-63. The latter without the author's name is a revised edition of his 1821 study, see Carson I. A. Ritchie (ed.), "British Documents on the Louisiana Campaign, 1814-15," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* XLIV (1961), 106.

<sup>47</sup>Lawrence to Dallas, April 25, 1815, M-221, reel 63; Winchester to Secretary of War, Mobile, February 17, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XXXIX. See also Stapleton, "Fort Morgan," 24, and Dickson, "Journal," 227, on Major Blue and the reinforcements sent by Winchester.



By the morning of February 11th, casualties had amounted to thirteen British killed and eighteen wounded, while the Americans had suffered one killed and ten wounded, including Colonel Lawrence. Without any protection from incoming artillery shells, the fort's powder magazine was exposed. One hot shot in the right place and the fort, with all of its personnel, could be destroyed.<sup>48</sup> Before opening their artillery offensive the British displayed a flag of truce. Brevet Major Harry Smith, later Lieutenant General Sir Harry Smith, carried General Lambert's offer to Lawrence: either surrender the fort or send out the women and children. Smith later recorded a rather fanciful conversation with Lawrence, which undoubtedly had improved with the years. Smith informed Lawrence that he had done all that any soldier could have been expected to do. Smith advised him that if Lawrence did not surrender, the British would "blow up the fort and burn your wooden walls about your ears." Lawrence accepted the honorable terms proffered by Smith, and the following day, February 12, the Americans marched out of the fort and stacked their arms.<sup>49</sup> Lawrence wrote General Jackson that "nothing but the want of provisions, and finding myself completely surrounded by thousands" had forced him to deliver Fort Bowyer to the enemy.<sup>50</sup>

Jackson's reaction can be anticipated. To James Monroe, Jackson wrote: "I received the sad intelligence of the surrender of fort Bowyer: this is an event which I little expected to happen, but after the most gallant resistance; that it should have taken place, without even a fire from the enemy's batteries is as astonishing as it is mortifying."<sup>51</sup>

Jackson's regard for Colonel Lawrence also underwent a substantial change from that evidenced the previous Septem-

<sup>48</sup>Latour, *Memoir*, 213-14; Horsman, *War of 1812*, 260; Stapleton, *Fort Morgan*, 22.

<sup>49</sup>Sir Harry Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith*, edited by G. C. Moore Smith, (New York, 1902), I, 248-50. According to Lt. Col. Alexander Dickson, Col. Lawrence had requested the delay in turning the fort over to the British because many of his men had gotten drunk, Dickson, "Journal," 226.

<sup>50</sup>Lawrence to Jackson, Fort Bowyer, February 12, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XXXIX. The articles of capitulation follow Lawrence's letter.

<sup>51</sup>Jackson to Monroe, New Orleans, February 24, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XLV. Latour indicated that the enemy's rear batteries had been firing before the surrender, *ibid.*, 212.

ber. On February 21, he wrote Governor David Holmes of the Mississippi Territory: "The fall of Fort Bowyer is truly grating to my feelings. If Lawrence had made such a defence as he made before what Laurels he would have added to his Brow but I am fearful his military fame is forever Blasted."<sup>52</sup> One anonymous soul may have expressed Jackson's real feelings: "Great God, how fine a graveyard that Fort Bowyer would have made for Col. Lawrence."<sup>53</sup> Although Jackson was furious with Lawrence for surrendering the fort, Lawrence had held out as long as possible and to have done more would have been sheer suicide.<sup>54</sup> On February 13, two days after the surrender of the fort, the British naval commander, Sir Alexander Cochrane, notified Jackson that the treaty of peace ending the war had been signed.<sup>55</sup>

When Jackson received Cochrane's message about the peace treaty, he did not immediately accept it at face value. He promptly published a proclamation in which he warned that the report might merely be intended to throw the United States off guard. "Fort Bowyer has fallen," he said, "but it must and will be speedily regained."<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the people of New Orleans received the news of peace with great joy. They "declined to attach any importance to Fort Bowyer" and promptly forgot the little fort "as completely as if it were in China."<sup>57</sup> Many historians today appear to have taken the same attitude. The Army, however, did not forget Fort Bowyer nor Colonel Lawrence.

Lawrence appeared before a formal court of inquiry to answer for his conduct. In defending his actions Lawrence told the court that he had informed General Jackson of the weakness of his position. Jackson had replied that he would remedy that defect by reinforcing the fort by land, "observing,"

<sup>52</sup>Jackson to Holmes, New Orleans, February 21, 1815, in Bassett, *Jackson Correspondence*, II, 178.

<sup>53</sup>Unsigned and undated in Andrew Jackson Letters, reel 17, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington.

<sup>54</sup>Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 161.

<sup>55</sup>Cochrane to Jackson, Off Mobile Bay, February 13, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XXXVIII.

<sup>56</sup>Address of General Jackson to the Soldiers and Citizens at New Orleans, February 19, 1815, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XLI.

<sup>57</sup>James, *Jackson*, 255.



Lawrence stated, "if we would defend the Front — he would take care of the rear."<sup>58</sup> Because of the overwhelming number of British troops involved, it is highly unlikely that any reinforcements Jackson or Winchester may have sent would have prevented the British victory. The court of inquiry cleared Colonel Lawrence of any misconduct.<sup>59</sup>

Lawrence had successfully kept the fort out of British hands in September, 1814, and the delaying action he fought in February, 1815, prevented the British capture of the fort until February 11, just two days before news of peace reached the Gulf Coast. As Major General Wilburt S. Brown (USMC, Ret.) observed: "The value of the major's [Lawrence's] achievements is too often overlooked."<sup>60</sup>

The facts speak for themselves. Although there is no comparison in the magnitude of the two battles, Fort Bowyer and not New Orleans was the last battle of the War of 1812, and the British won that battle.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Fort Bowyer

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<sup>58</sup>Lawrence to Dallas, April 25, 1815, M-221, reel 63.

<sup>59</sup>General Orders, Headquarters, Western Section, 7th Military District, New Orleans, April 7, 1815, signed by Major General E. P. Gaines, cleared Lawrence of any dereliction of duty, in Latour, *Memoir*, Appendix, No. XL.

<sup>60</sup>Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 168.

<sup>61</sup>Some historians might argue that Fort Bowyer was not the last "battle" of the War of 1812. On February 24, 1815, six barges carrying 250 British up the St. Marys River were fired upon and forced to return to Cumberland Island. Apparently the shots from both banks of the river were not returned by the men in the barges, who may have suffered as many as 160 casualties. Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco* (Athens, 1954), 290-91. In addition, the war continued at sea until June of 1815, during which time several engagements between British and United States ships occurred, with casualties on both sides, Horsman, *War of 1812*, 262-63.

Patrick preferred to call the encounters on the St. Marys and off the Georgia coast "the last scene[s] of the War of 1812." It is true, the last shots of the war were not fired at Fort Bowyer, but none of the later "scenes" compared in magnitude with the battle at Fort Bowyer. Thus I still consider Fort Bowyer the last "battle" of the War of 1812.

The next battle on Mobile Point took place in 1864, when 2,000 Union troops commanded by Major General Gordon Granger landed east of then Fort Morgan on August 9. The same or similar sand hills which protected the British troops in February of 1815, also protected the Union forces forty-nine years later. In fact, the Union plan of attack of 1864 did not differ significantly from the British plan of 1815. But Fort Morgan suffered from the same deficiency which Fort Bowyer experienced; insufficient guns on the east side of the fort to protect it from land attacks. Only sixteen out of a total of 136 guns defended the land side of the

had played an important and perhaps even a pivotal role in the war on the Gulf Coast. We may not be able to get the authors and publishers of United States history textbooks to add Fort Bowyer to their volumes, but we can bring the fort to the attention of the general public and to those teaching United States history and hope that they will share that information with their friends and students.

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Confederate-held fort. Fort Morgan was far better constructed than Fort Bowyer, but it held out only two weeks before the Confederates surrendered. For a discussion of Fort Morgan's defenses and a picture of the fort see James R. Hinds, "Stone Walls and Iron Guns: Effectiveness of Civil War Forts," *Periodical: Journal of the Council on Abandoned Military Posts* (January, 1981), 12(1):40-41, 43. For more on the Civil War battle at Fort Morgan see Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama and Her People* (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1927), 538-39; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama* (Reprinted ed.; Spartanburg, S. C.: The Reprint Co., Publishers, 1978), 708-09.



*Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860.* By Anne C. Loveland. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980. Pp. xi, 293. Hard Back \$30.00, Soft Back \$12.95)

The title outlines an ambitious task limited in execution by a focus which gives the work coherence. "Evangelicals" are Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian clergymen, the book a readable written survey of their social views. The author stresses a central theme: the ministers' concern for maintaining traditional reliance on God.

Nine chapters fall into three groups. The first group surveys conversion and calling, the ministry and revivalism. The second group of chapters concerns the "social order." Loveland rightly points out that ministers were concerned with individuals' conduct rather than with social structures. They urged obedience to authority and most avoided political involvement. Within the temperance movement ministers debated the church's proper role in reform. Ministers' involvement in benevolence increased throughout the period. But in the case of the Sabbatarian movement, "violations of the Sabbath continued, proof of the ineluctable advance of worldliness and secularization in the Old South" (p. 180). The author does not develop this and other provocative generalizations.

Concluding chapters survey slavery, the religious instruction of Negroes and the sectional controversy. Churches retreated from early antislavery positions. Ministers came to concern themselves with what Loveland terms "abuses" of slavery: denying the Gospel to slaves and denying or violating slaves' marriage relations.

In her survey of attempts to evangelize blacks, Loveland highlights the white ministers' opposition to black preachers. She gives no account of the activities of black preachers and exhorters trained and deployed with the encouragement and cooperation of whites. Loveland implies that separate churches for blacks were mainly products of white action. By the 1850s, she asserts, most evangelicals seem to have favored separate churches. Recent studies suggest instead that social control,

not separation, was the concern of white religionists, and that Black Christians were far from passive. Loveland does not bring her evidence to bear on these points of apparent contradiction.

For ministers, the author concludes, the sectional controversy involved fundamental moral and religious principles. Loveland stresses ministers' apolitical affirmations of penitence, prayer, and reliance on providence. The single paragraph with which she concludes both chapter and book bears quoting:

Thus, southern evangelicals relied on God to settle the sectional controversy just as they trusted in him to resolve the slavery question and to bring about temperance reformation. They were as dubious of human ability in social and political matters as in the matter of salvation. The belief in the sovereignty and omnipotence of God and the dependence of man formed the whole of their thinking, and more than any other single element, contributed to the distinctiveness of southern evangelical thought in the nineteenth century" (p. 265).

Loveland's repeated emphasis on this theme is misleading. It inclines readers to see the ministers as otherworldly personalities (as indeed the author suggests) and to miss the complex interaction between religious leaders' views and their culture. For example, ministers' relative effort for the religious instruction of Negroes and their relative lack of action to protect slave marriages, another avowed concern, were influenced by the economics of slavery, by social pressure and by the denominations' theologies and decision-making structures as well — elements Loveland neglects by adopting the ministers' individualistic perspective. We see certain views, but not the cultural context that shapes and is shaped by them.

The book surveys a selected slice of Southern clergy that is all white, proportionately more Presbyterian than denominational figures warrant, heavily Southeastern, and highly articulate. The volume itself is attractively produced, well bound,

carefully proofread. Unfortunately, the editorial decision to lump all sources for a paragraph into one footnote sometimes obscures the evidence. In addition, analyses and conclusions are frustratingly brief.

Louisiana State University professor of history Anne C. Loveland exhibits fluently written research in her first book about Southern religion. One hopes that the next one demonstrates a contextual sense of Southern religion and social order that this ambitious but flawed first attempt lacks.

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*The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 9: 1906-08. Louis R. Harlan, Raymond W. Smock, and Nan E. Woodruff (Editors), (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980. pp. xxxii, 703, Bibliography and index. \$20.00)

Again, as in previous volumes, Booker T. Washington's complex and sometimes enigmatic personality comes to the fore. Through these "selected" letters, addresses, and journal articles Washington is at once educational institution leader, securer of philanthropic funding, leader of a moderate policy of racial advancement, secret financial backer of legal attacks on racial discrimination, advisor to Presidents, and a politician, himself, in every sense of the word. This volume pictures Washington in a very difficult two years of racial strife in the United States.

Washington's correspondence is laden with his concern for and satisfaction in his beloved Tuskegee, and nothing was allowed to stand in that institution's way. He was quick to terminate the services of a long-time chaplain on flimsy evidence of moral turpitude. His philosophy of integrating vocational attitudes and skills with intellectual pursuits never wavered in the slightest, and he stood ready to discharge those faculty members who refused to agree. He chastised a "friendly" race leader for leaning just a little in the di-

rection of "higher" education, though parental pride required him to rejoice with daughter, Portia, upon the successful completion of her advanced musical study in Germany.

Washington continually emphasized the importance of economic success as a prerequisite to racial uplift, though from time to time he was called upon by even friendly supporters to defend that position. He utilized every opportunity to point out in his own speeches and writings and to contribute to those of others information on the financial success that had been achieved in the black community.

The Tuskegee educator remained, as he had been before, a money and power broker. He was looked upon by philanthropists as an important source of information on the progress of black Americans and as a wise counsel in the allocation of funds to black educational enterprises. There is surprisingly little patronizing of philanthropists, though; astute politician that he was, he never appeared to reject the ideas of whites whose good will was important to him and/or Tuskegee. Two Presidents obviously perceived the Tuskegeean as spokesman for black America — an honor, though sometimes a dubious one. Despite the fact that he was frequently called upon for advice by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, Washington was often disappointed by the frequency with which they ignored his advice. Yet, in the face of such disappointments, his support of the Republican Party never wavered. Racist utterances and policies of these two Presidents placed him in the unenviable position of needing to demonstrate to blacks that he did not sanction such policies while demonstrating to the Republican Party and to white philanthropists that he was not unmindful of their help. This predicament was all the more perplexing because of the increasing pressure on Washington from elements of the black community to be more assertive in the quest for equal rights.

These papers reflect the fact that Washington and his philosophy had fallen upon hard times. White Southerners, whom he considered to be blacks' best friends, participated in the Atlanta Race Riot and other atrocities; the President, whom he reputedly influenced, hastily punished only the black officers involved in the Brownsville affray; and the Niagara

Movement, which he vigorously opposed, seemed to be attracting progressively more of the race's promising leaders. Under such pressure, Washington was at his worst, advocating spying on opponents' meetings, investigating the private lives of opponents' families, and having editorials published under fictitious names in his secretly-financed newspapers.

The real Booker T. Washington was a complex man, as the material in this volume amply illustrates. This collection of more than 530 pieces of correspondence, plus assorted addresses and other items, presents a clearer picture of the "Wizard of Tuskegee" than has been seen before, although little in the nature of his behavior seems to be truly new. The editors are to be commended for a superb book, carefully edited, thoughtful annotated, and, presumably representative of the larger collection. This volume adds valuably to the collection and whets the appetite for volumes covering the last seven years of the black Alabama educator and renowned racial leader's life.

Bill L. Weaver  
Office of Educational Development  
University of Alabama in Birmingham







# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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SUMMER, 1981

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OF

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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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THE END OF ODEN'S WAR:  
A CONFEDERATE CAPTAIN'S DIARY

edited by

Michael Barton

John Piney Oden was one of the Civil War's persevering men. He represents those who kept trying to be warriors at the front, but whose wounds made them wait in the rear, wanting very much to act while they could only watch. His diary from April 6 to June 29, 1863, shows his frustration in clear detail. He faced the enemy, ennui, and he knew there was no glory in that.

Oden was born on May 4, 1823, and was a native of the area around Selma, Alabama. He enlisted at Montevallo in Company K, 10th Regiment, Alabama Infantry, on June 4, 1861, at the rank of First Sergeant. However, he soon became ill, and was sent to Warrenton Springs on August 21 to convalesce. But he did not recover quickly, was discharged for "disability" on September 12 that year, and left with the \$85.66 due him for clothing and pay.

Later he was fit enough to rejoin his regiment, this time as a Lieutenant, but was wounded in the leg at Sharpsburg on September 17, 1862. He went home again to recuperate, then tried to catch up with his men in early April, 1863; now he was a Captain, and that is where the diary begins.

It is evident from the first few entries that Oden must have been a fairly important man — after arriving in Montgomery on April 7 he arranged some "cotton matters," and he soon had an interview with the Governor, who gave him a letter that would make it possible to get castings from a foundry for his mill. With those affairs settled Oden traveled by train from Montgomery to Atlanta, Knoxville, and finally Richmond, arriving on April 11. There a doctor told him it would be a long time, "if ever," before he had full use of his lame leg. Still, he took charge of a squad of soldiers and went on after his regiment. He found it near Hamilton's Crossing and settled down to wait for a chance at more duty.

Here his diary concentrates on the details of camp life: soldiers fixing fish hooks, going on picket, hearing sermons, watching Yankees, staying out of the rain, policing the grounds, and waiting for battle. His life now was a very "monotonous thing," he wrote, and he felt like a "common loafer." Battle finally came at Chancellorsville from May 1 to 5. Oden obtained a doctor's permission to follow his regiment, and so he was able to report from the sidelines. Though Lee's army was victorious, Oden wrote afterwards about those comrades who had been personally defeated: "the work of amputation is now fully begun . . . enough too, to excite all the sympathy within the human breast." Walking over the field a few days later, he observed that "great waste follows great battles," but now "nature" was "once more permitted to roll on."

Oden then made application to be a Quartermaster assigned to Talladega County "to collect the taxes in kind." He waited impatiently for his paperwork to be processed, spending most of his time visiting friends in camp, admiring the full dress of Spring, and worrying about the possibility of defeat at Vicksburg. Otherwise, he was still impressed with the "slug-gishness of ordinary camp duties." His application had not been approved by June 4, so he submitted his resignation from the army. By June 9 he was back in Richmond. The time he spent in the capital was also "rather dull," taken up by trying to get the red tape of his discharge untangled. Finally he got out. Then he bought \$2050 worth of tobacco and started for home.

When he landed in Selma he closed his diary with the briefest, concrete commentary on the effects of the war: "Saw a great many men on the streets but few acquaintances."

Oden's diary is reproduced here exactly from a typescript copy; the original text was in a small, green, leather book, 5¾ by 3½ inches, with 85 daily, one-page entries. On the flyleaf was inscribed, "To Lieut. Oden, from Bettie A. H. of Maryland." It is now the only personal document made public from his unit — there is no regimental history or anyone else's diary, letters, or memoir published. I am indebted to Professor and Mrs. John S. Wade, Jr., of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, for making it available, and also to the National Archives for giving me more information on Oden.



Diary of Lt. John Piney Oden: April 6, 1863 — June 29, 1863  
Small green leather book  $5\frac{3}{4}$  X  $3\frac{1}{2}$ .  
Inscribed on the flyleaf:

To Lieut. Oden

from

Bettie A. H. of Maryland

1863

April 6, Monday. Beautiful morning and long to be remembered. Set out once more to my Regt. which I have been separated with since the ever memorable Battle of Sharpsburg on the 17th of Sept. last. Am in tolerable good general health but not clear of lameness. Arrived at Selma in due time, got my cotton matter satisfactorily arranged, bade adieu to Father and other friends. Got aboard of the Steamer St. Nichols bound for Montgomery about sunset.

April 7. Arrived at Montgomery early this morning. Saw my lady friend safely situated at the Exchange Hotel. Had an interview with his excellency the Governor, obtained a letter recommending or advising any foundry to do any casting that may be necessary for my mill, got the clothing Col. Darby had here for our Co. Strolled around the balance of the day, met W. T. Stubblefield and others of my acquaintance. There are a great many going back to front.

April 8. Left Montgomery on the  $5\frac{1}{2}$  A. M. train. Beautiful morning but a little too cool, had some frost, fear the wheat and fruit will be injured at home. "Tis a very pleasant time indeed to travel. Was very much crowded. Arrived at Atlanta in due time. Nothing of any note occurred on the way. Left on the 7 P. M. train for Dalton after partaking sumptuously of a two dollar supper. When dark came on stowed away the children and made other arrangements for napping.

April 9. Daylight found us considerably on our way towards Knoxville. This morning frost here is nearly as heavy as any we have had this winter. In passing Hanover met my old friend Mr. Tate who treated me so kindly last fall. Saw a great many soldiers about Knoxville. Met a great many paroled prisoners captured at Murfresboro. The news is confirmed

of our successful defense at Charleston. Arrived in due time at Bristol, there left Mrs. Cherry.

April 10. Travelled all night, again another beautiful morning, bright frost, everything looks very winter-like. The wheat in particular is very late. Arrived at Liberty in due time, but owing to a breakdown or run-off of a train ahead, lay over here until the next regular train which is twenty-four hours. There were several injured, one Mississippi (?) soldier killed a paroled prisoner from Tennessee. Met Dr. Letcher, strolled around, found private quarters and are very comfortably *fixed*.

April 11. This is a beautiful morning, quite cool to an Alabamian. Strolled around town and passed off the time as best we could. Took the 2 P. M. train, arrived at Richmond 3 A. M. Sunday — meanwhile lying over yesterday visited Dr. Letcher's hospital. Spent a while with him very pleasantly. While there wrote a letter home. All the trains between there and Knoxville going both ways are crowded and a great many prisoners are going both ways.

April 12. Sunday. Very beautiful morning indeed. Went to my old friend Mrs. Taylor's, engaged board and after breakfast commenced a stroll to Exchange Hotel, Post Office, Capitol Square, etc. After dinner called on Dr. Clark who examined my wound and gave it as his opinion that it would be a good while before I could have good use of my limb if ever, went to the passport office to get our papers to pass to our Regt., reported to L. H. (?) next morning and took care of a squad.

April 13. Took charge of a squad at the train and set out for Hamilton's Crossing at 10 o'clock A. M., arrived there about 11 A. M., reported my squad to the Provost Marshal, got leave and direction to our Regt. Met Geo. Taylor with a wagon and got our luggage carried out and took a seat myself. The Regt. is stationed about 7 or 8 miles from the depot, passed through the battlefields, etc.

April 14. Found the boys generally very well and in fine spirits and only moderately fixed up, as they have only been at this place a short time. The Regt. is crowded very much and

very much tangled and confused and consequently confused, hence from these circumstances, presume our stay at this place will not be long. At any rate, hope we will be better fitted up by moving again soon. Went out to the field to witness a brig. drill as a spectator. Have not reported for active duty yet.

April 15, This is one of the dreaded days in camp, raining heavy all day, all closely confined to their several or respective bunk or shelters. While some are only tolerably good, others are most intolerable, however, let the wide world wag as will, the soldier will be gay and happy still. As I have taken a very sore throat and bad cold for the life of me cannot be very happy. We finally succeeded in getting J. T. Mims' substitute mustered in and John of course relieved.

April 16. Cleared off this morning very much to our gratification as our Regt. has to go on picket this evening so most sincerely hope the winter is now broke.' All hands are very lively this morning fixing up fish hooks, etc., preparatory for going on picket. Wrote to William Perryman about the death of his brother Henry. Sauntered around camp, rather lonely this evening, however, met with my old friend Capt. Truss and whiled away the balance of the evening.

April 17. The weather has not entirely cleared off. Visited our picket post, found the river bank slick as an oyster slide being used all winter along here the Yankees are all along on the opposite side seemingly diligent. Our heights enable one to view their forces for some distance. There is a good large force in sight. Our boys are scattered all over the battlefield like so many cattle or sheep gathering wild onions, others are to be found up to their necks seining for fish just below a dam *across* the river above the city.

April 18. This is a beautiful sunshiny day, the most spring-like of any since my arrival and even any as yet this season. Had our payrolls approved by the Col. Com. There is more leisure today the boys say than they have had in sometime and hence permission is granted to several to wash but not having utensils enough to wash in, but few can wash at a time. The camps are being policed and a general fixing up is going on.

Puts one in mind of days gone by at home sweeping yards, etc., Saturday evenings.

April 19. Sabbath morning clear and beautiful. All hands are astir fixing for Regt. inspection. The Col. seemed very much pleased. Our guns were bright as new money. After this, assembled and heard a most excellent sermon from Rev. Mr. Renfro. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. Col. W. H. Forney came in this evening looking only tolerable well. The day passed off unusually quiet, a little cooler towards night. New moon seen this eve.

April 20. Another rainy day, not quite so hard and more intervals than the last, consequently, the boys are out occasionally playing cat, etc. J. T. McMillian left us this morning for home. Learn the Yankees are unusually still today. As soon as the weather settles will look for a movement of some kind. However much they may move and change about, have no idea they will ever attempt a crossing here. Everything seems to be more dull and monotonous every day in camps.

April 21. Quite cool today and very unlike spring. All vegetation is certainly very late. Consulted Col. Forney about getting a horse. He advised me not to buy yet. He is of the opinion we will not move from this place for sometime. Col. Caldwell came in today, have not seen him yet. No news from Norfolk or Suffolk. We are anxiously awaiting news, from former news we are very expectant from that quarter.

April 22. Our Regt. is out on picket; last night was very cold for the business, however, as that is a getting way from camps and a chance to amuse themselves fishing, all hands go very cheerfully. Visited the picket line, had a very plain view of the Yankees, their pickets, reserves, etc., but did not see many other of their forces from this position. This was the extreme posts up the river or the left of our infantry line. Procured some fish bait and tried my hand but did not succeed.

April 23. This is another desperate rainy day. Pretty hard and cold hence very disagreeable. No time to read nor write but must answer Kate's received 21st inst. Finished the payroll and drew the money, *paid* off the Co. One Co. from each

Regt. of our Brig. was called out. Some say to strengthen the pickets somewhere above where the Yankees are threatening a crossing. Would prefer to think the reverse; viz., that we are about to make a small raid on them.

April 24. Still raining this morning, very cold at that, almost sleet, bad time soldiering along now; however, we crowded up in and under our little and otherwise scanty shelters and while away the dreary moments as best we can. Yesterday's news from the North justifies the idea of no more fighting until fall, if then. Witnessed the unpleasant sight of two men of Co. H (?) marched in front of our Regt. with bbl-shirts and one-half of their heads shaved.

April 25. Clear and very windy today, as the wind is from the north 'tis a little cool and very unlike April weather. Feel better today than I have since my return to the camp. Hope now to get along without any more setting back but have already fallen off very much. Col. Forney made his first attempt to drill the Regt. The Regt. is very well drilled. Strolled around camp to while away time. 'Tis getting to be very monotonous thing with me indeed, feel to be a common *loafer*.

April 26. Sunday. Inspection arms, policing camp, etc., after which Rev. Mr. Renfro preached one of his usual interesting sermons from Psalms 97 - 1. The Lord reign. Made a proposition to furnish the Regt. with a weekly newspaper, religious, but not sectarian. Subscribed for 6 copies for our Co. Paper published at Atlanta, Ga. Am pestered this evening with very severe griping in my bowels. Got some pills and salts to take in the morning. Our Regt. went on picket this evening.

April 27. This is the most spring-like day we have had. A few more such will give everything quite a different appearance and with us agreeable. Feel better today. The Regt. returned from picket, nothing new from the Yankees but little talking across now, however one of their sentinels said to one of ours, if he had a chance he would shoot ole Abraham, therefore, they are getting tired of the war. Hope that shooting spirit will increase if there is any close in such a sentiment.

April 28. Another dark, dismal and drizzly day, very much to



the discomfiture of the soldier, however, as it is not raining very much our old field is filled with boys playing ball with an occasional yell that would do justice to at least such a number of Indians; but for something of this kind the camp would be the more irksome. No news of much interest in the papers now. Am getting very anxious to hear from home.

April 29. Was called to attention of our fighting impliments last night at 1 o'clock to be ready at a moment's warning. The enemy is said to be making a demonstration at Banks Ford. All things remained quiet until 7½ A . M. when cannonading was heard down the river, also small arms could be heard down the river. Also small arms could be heard a piece off from camp; heard in the evening that a large force had succeeded in crossing. Learn they are moving up the river rapidly.

April 30. Great excitement prevailed throughout the camps this morning. Rose at 3½ o'clock, struck tents, paced up and loaded wagons, rained slowly until near 12 M — when the sun shone out beautiful and warm. Many reports are now afloat. From reliable information learn heavy skirmishing is going on 6 or 8 miles above here on the river, perhaps in Gen. Posey's Brig. Our Regt. has all gone on picket this evening, extending down near to Fred. Heard heavy cannonading below Fredericksburg.

May 1. Beautiful day, a little foggy, everything is in motion and very exciting, 8½ o'clock fog disappears. The enemy send up their balloon, their drums are plainly heard opposite our camps across the river. Expect the battle to open every moment; on our left our troops are concentrating there. First gun fired at 11½ A. M. Our Brig. is now in the east of camps ½ mile waiting for our Regt. to be withdrawn from the picket line. At last they come in and proceeded towards the firing which was about 4 or 5 miles distant. Started in that direction ahead of our Regt., obtained permission of Dr. Taylor to follow our Regt. at will. The Regt. passed while we were at Dr. Taylor's hospital. Set out after our Brig. Overtook them about 2 miles off. Took position in some ditches a short while. Threw out skirmishes and soon followed by the whole Brig., followed on ½ mile after sunset when in ½ mile of river turned back for Dr. Taylor's hospital which T. B., J. H. and a man

who had accidentally shot his finger and myself reached about 9 o'clock.

May 2. Had a pretty good night's rest. Our Brig. was ordered back to Banks Ford and passed us at 2 o'clock this morning. Set out after daylight for our Regt. Went through by old camp. Called at a miserable hut but however asked for breakfast which we luckily obtained. About 10 minutes after 8 A. M. firing commenced about 1 mile west of where we were last night when we turned back. Went on in pursuit of our Regt. but just before we found it learned the Brig. would rendezvous where they did yesterday. Turned our course for Dr. Taylor's quarters which was out on the plank road in sight of the place of rendezvous, arrived there 11½ o'clock A. M. Lay around there until 4 P. M. when the Brig. was ordered to take their former position. T. H. B. went back while I remained. The firing has been very regular up to this time when it commenced. Many reports are coming in, all very favorable. About this time a few heavy guns are heard below Fred. Can't say from whom (perhaps our signal). Small arms are plainly heard up on the river at six o'clock this evening.

May 3. Sunday. The Yankees' chosen day for battle. More or less fighting about Chancellorsville. General Earley's Div. was all turned back last night to attend to these crossings before Fred. which so far, 7 o'clock this morning turns out to be a feint, at least but little firing heard in that direction. The firing in front of Chans. was resumed at an early hour this morning very rapid and continuous, very clear and pretty strong wind from the south. Still the firing is distinctly heard. All are anxiously awaiting but sanguine of the results. 'Tis said Gen. Lee has them now right where he wants them and the news is altogether confirming. A A. M. Gen. Early begins to test whether 'tis a feint or not at Fred. Gen. Wilcox takes position in the ditches at Dr. Taylor's and to the right, went down about this time, found our Regt. in the upper ditch. Gen. Barksdale's Brig. in the lower one and the Yankees between the canal and river thick and crossing rapidly at Fred. & below. Are now becoming satisfied 'tis not a feint by no means. Very desperate fighting is now going on to our right. About 10 minutes to 11 o'clock A. M. our Brig. (in particular our Regt.) was ordered to move by the right flank while T. H. B. and my-

self moved by the *other*. About this time Barksdale's line was charged and broke in and our Brig. was ordered to fall back. Very good order was observed. Stopped at the fork of the road or just below on the plank. We got reinforcements. Our Brig. turned back to the brick Ch., formed line of battle and soon met the Yankees and a most desperate fight issued from 5 P. M. until near night. Drove the Yankees back to this toll gate with great slaughter.

May 4. Daylight presents a sad and very distressing spectacle around our Brig. Hospital. The work of amputation is now fully begun. Three tables are constantly filled with the groaning subjects, enough too, to excite all the sympathy within the human breast. Had one amputation in my company. Wm. Pope had his left thigh taken off near his knee. Wm. Staples is mortally wounded. T. F. Russell is badly wounded in hip and thigh. Several others slightly wounded. Wm. Allen and A. M. Lyon are killed A. Crowson, T. Martin, W. O. Wesson & H. H. Stoveall when the Regt. turned back or at least when it halted yesterday. I went on with Dr. Taylor's ambulances to where he established his hospital. Got Rev. Mr. Renfro's horse, went back while the fight was raging as near as I dared to go at least to where the balls were cutting up the dust, remained there until night when the firing ceased. Went up to the Church where I met our Regt., learned all the particulars I could. T. J. Hunt and myself went back to the hospital. Got off to bed in an old crib 11 P. M. There was some cannonading and pretty heavy too occasionally toward Fred., some but not much about Chans. At 5½ P. M. it was very brisk out there for a little while. Reports from all directions are very favorable, presume the victory at both or rather all places is complete. Made a dispatch to Selma Reporter and sent by Capt. Ragan. 'Tis an eventful and ever memorable day with me being another birthday of mine spent in the War which too rolls around my 40th year. Later this eve heavy cannonading is on the river below Dickerson red house.

May 5. Some little firing last night among the big guns. Some Regt. of our Brig. took a good many prisoners last night near our old camps. What were not taken were not to be found anywhere on this side the river or anywhere in this neighborhood. Went up to the brick church where our Regt. has been

in position since the engagement. Found them employed in guarding prisoners, gathering up and burying the dead. Had quite a pile of Yankees. Found the body of A. M. Lyon today. Received orders to fall in. Went down to the toll gate, remained there until 2 or 3 P. M. Ordered in the direction of Chans., about this time a very heavy rain set in, rained until night. Struck camp about 8 o'clock. Our boys found their Yankee rubber cloths of great use; having lost all their knapsacks when they fell back from the ditches. They were very eager to supply themselves at the first opportunity which the most of them did amply. But little cannonading through the night.

May 6. Still very cloudy and even raining slowly and very cold. Cannonading has commenced to the right of this road (plank) seemingly not more than 2 miles off. Our Brig. is ordered in that direction. Others are also making their way there too, however unpleasant the weather all hands seem to step full and cheerful, the news is cheering from that quarter. Gen. Jackson is said to have them surrounded by entrenchments. Remained with our ordinance wagon which stopped one mile this side of Chancellorsville. The firing ceased gradually. Our Brig. was soon ordered back to our camps which place we reached about 5 P. M. Still raining more or less. Quite a stir fixing up with Yankee tents, rubber cloths, etc., as best they can, our baggage wagons not having returned from the rear. However much rain falls and inclement the wind blows all seem to be jubilant over their great victory, especially after seeing the battlefield about Chancellorsville, their gigantic fortifications, the immense army stores captured, etc., etc. —

May 7. Everything is very quiet this morning. The booming of big guns has once more ceased and nature once more permitted to roll on as it were uninterrupted. Raining occasionally, however unpleasant each and every one is eager to tell what occurred to his *certain knowledge*. Bagge wagons returned late this evening with cooking utensils, a few [     ?     ] etc. Fixed up better for the inclement weather. Took a stroll to view the opposite side of the river, saw but few Yanks.

May 8. Still very quiet. Learn there is going to be an exchange of wounded prisoners at Banks Ford today. Took a stroll over the battlefield on this side of the plank road with

R. T. J. Find a great deal of sign (sound) timber literally shot to pieces with small arms. There are a great many guns and accoutrements picked up and stacked all along the line. Great waste follows great battles. Learn this evening something was lacking about the exchanging the prisoners, hence no exchange.

May 9. Very beautiful day. Spring is once more presented in all its loveliness. Bright sun up today and a few others will soon clothe this heretofore cold and desolate region in its green mantle, so much desired by both man and beast. Took a stroll down to our ditches or *starting* point of today a week ago. Viewed the Yankees across the river who appeared to be very busy passing to-and-fro with their wagons and Heard Gen. Lee's order or proclamation. Send this evening 9 Regt. to observe tomorrow in W————

May 10. Sunday. Another fine day. Had inspection arms, afterwards preaching by Rev. Mr. Renfro from I Cor. 15 - 51. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, etc. Wrote a letter today to my Hostess Mrs. Macgill, Hagerstown, Md. Went over near Dr. Taylor's where the Yankee wounded were. Met a surgeon who promised to mail my letter. Had a good long confab with several of the surgeons. All seem to agree there was great slaughter among the Yanks. This has been the warmest day this spring. Almost summer. All vegetation is putting forth rapidly.

May 11. Got a horse and went out to see the battlefield around Chancellorsville. Have never seen such defenses, varied, etc. It seems to one not skilled in the art of war to say the least, to be a solid mass of barricaded confusion, especially after our boys began to press them out of their dens. Nearly all the woods have since been burned over where there was any fighting, either by the shell or set on purpose to assist in covering their retreat, which was in great confusion from the signs, guns, knapsacks, accoutrements, etc., strown to the river 75,000 guns.

May 12. Very beautiful spring-like day. Very much appreciated after so much bad weather. Started my application and recommendation for a transfer as Q. M. to Talladega Co. to collect the taxes in kind. Was favored by every com. officer



in the Regt., which am ever grateful for whether I get the transfer or not. The transferring the wounded Yankees to their own side of the river has been going on for a day or two, are pretty well done this evening. Wrote D. B. a letter today. Had no mail today for our Co. but little news anyway. All things quiet.

May 13. Was threatened with rain last night but the sun rose beautiful this morning and bids fare for another fine day. Set out early to see Capt. Cook, found him very bad. Leaned the board of Phasians at Gen. Anderson's headquarters was to meet today, who I will have to go before before my papers will go to War Department and hence I soon set out in search of that place; learned before reaching there the board would not meet, turned about and made my way back to camp. Had a hasty shower this evening.

May 14. Some little rain last night and is very cloudy this morning and even raining a little occasionally. Our Regt. is out on picket, hope it will not rain much as it is very disagreeable. Strolled down on the river near our line, never saw any Yanks. They seem to have all moved down opposite Fred. Everything is remarkably quiet now on their side. Capt. Truss and Blewster returned with Co. this evening (19th). They report some of our boys back already that were taken prisoners.

May 15. Very free day but quite cool, almost frost. Lt. Johnson and myself went down to see Capt. Cook. Found him very low, remained until after noon. He appeared a little better, but nothing permanent. Got a good dinner, corn bread, vegetables, etc. Received a letter from Kate, larned there had been great excitement about the Yankee raid that attempted to pass through our state (with every person in the whole country but wax into them.

May 16. Clear and cool and windy, more like fall than spring. Received our *things* from Richmond, coffee, sugar, cups, plates, knives and forks, etc., etc. Bill \$27.00. Borrowed Mr. Renfro's horse and made my way to General Anderson's headquarters. Leaned my papers have gone on up to War Department. Made but little tarry. Saw a good many fine horses, well kept in-

deed, etc. After my return learned of Dr. Taylor about my papers. Hope they have gone the right direction and will soon be heard from.

May 17. Another fine day and Sabbath. Expect preaching today by Rev. Mr. Renfro but a visit to where Capt. Cook is with my friend Capt. Truss will deprive me of the benefit of it. Found the Capt. better and even have some hope, however Dr. Taylor says there is none for him. Got a good dinner, corn bread, vegetables, asparagus, etc., relished it very much. Find several signal stations around here and learn Gen. Hood's Div. is above on the river and Gen. Longstreet is below. Expect a forward move.

May 18. This our picket day has rolled around, seemingly too soon, however 'tis so and the Regt. must go this evening at 21½ o'clock. Brig. drill in the morning and picket duty in the evening is putting in duty pretty tight. Everything in this vicinity is very quiet. Went out to our post, saw few blue bellies at the lower post below Banks Ford, none above. Saw they were anxious to change papers but made no change while I stayed, returned to camp by sunset.

May 18. Very cool again this morning. Wind from the north about 10 o'clock A. M. Heard several cannon a little west of north a great way off. Can't say whether they are signal guns or not. Had milk and butter for dinner in camp today. Gen. Huey & Capt. Cook's Lady arrived today. News from home is all cheerful, crops very good especially wheat. Our boys got a Phil. paper of yesterday while on picket. Great efforts are being made to smooth their late reverses.

May 20. All things around being very quiet this morning adds to the serenity, beauty and grandeur of the season. All the vegetation is putting forth rapidly. Forest leaves are nearly grown. Learn today, too late to go before the board, my papers have been returned, so that ordeal will now have to wait until Saturday before they can be started aright. Am getting impatient. See from today's papers detailed accounts of the battles in Miss. and expect more hard fighting there soon.

May 21. Have a report in this morning that our forces are

crossing the river between here and Culpepper near the latter place. 'Tis beautiful weather indeed for an army to move. Received the intelligence of the death of Capt. Cook. He died at 8 o'clock A. M. His body was sent to Hamilton's Crossing this evening. Received a letter from Kate this evening, was pleased to hear all were well and Felix had got home but sorry to hear the plough stock were so skinned up and even crippled.

May 22. News of yesterday unimportant, however fear Gen. Pemberton has not been so successful as might have been. Went out to witness Brig. drill, could plainly hear Yankee arms. Expect grand reviews are going on and great efforts are being made to keep up appearances. The balance of the day passed off rapidly, lying around sleeping in the shade. Saw an elderly lady very busy going around through the Regt. of our Brig. principally in the 11 Ala. Regt.

May 23. Clear, very still and warm. Summer seems to have rushed in all at once. Walked over to Gen. Anderson's headquarters, met the board, my *case* was to be laid before General Anderson as to whether he wanted to approve the application on account of *light duty* or not. Was very kindly treated by the board. Found it very warm stretching across the old fields. News of today very discouraging, fear our forces there, Vicksburg, will have to do some desperate fighting to sustain or even extricate themselves.

May 24. Another Sabbath has rolled around. Clear and exceedingly warm. Attended preaching in the 9th Regt. Quite a good turnout. Went with J. L. D. to Mr. Tonsile's for dinner, by a very tight *squeeze* got a nice one. No news from the West of importance. From private sources hear of the casualties of the 30th Regt. occasionally. Nothing as yet has shown very much fighting by that Regt.; however, expect ere this they have been into it as well as all that army.

May 25. Quite a stir in camp today paying off the Regt. generally which always produces more or less a gratifying, stirring time, at least more so than that which is brought about on the eve of battle (fall in). This evening's news is very cheering from the West, however, 'tis not altogether reliable,

but hope, fond hope is want to catch at everything that is the least favorable. Received a letter from Nettie of 28th ult. by L. E. S. He has been sick on the way, hence the delay. Very cool this morning.

May 26. Very cool and cloudy. Fire is very pleasant, in fact, too cool to do without. T. H. B. and myself strolled down to Mr. Robey's, got a nice dinner. Met Col. Sanders and Caldwell who *wanted* dinner too but failed. Learned Gen. Wilcox went to Rich. today. Expect he will be promoted. Had some stir among the officers in our Regt. on the Caldwell matter [ ? ]. Received a letter from A. J. C. today. All well and Kate was there (18) on a visit.

May 27. Yet cloudy this morning but some appearance of clearing off, turning warmer. Lt. C. is gone to Rich. today, no news of interest yesterday, especially from Vicksburg. Am again quite anxious to hear from that quarter. Was ordered to draw 3 days' rations and cook them immediately but before getting under headway the order was countermanded. Learn there was a cavalry fight up the river this morning. News from Vicksburg good again this evening.

May 28. Everything remains very quiet, presume there was nothing but a cavalry skirmish yesterday which never amounts to much. Received a letter from Billy yesterday of the 18th inst. Was proud to learn they were all well at home. Wrote to Lizzie today. Went down to the river and took a bath. No one offered to molest or make us afraid, however, saw 2 Yanks on the other bank with horses who soon as we pitched in moved their horses fearing we might swim over and get them. No news this evening. The Regt. went out on picket.

May 29. Received orders last night to cook 1 day's rations and be ready to move at a moment's warning. We are ready this morning but (no) orders to move as yet. (8 A. M.) There is evidently something afloat. Their balloons are occasionally to be seen and artillery moving up to the heights near Banks Ford. Whether they intend crossing again or a pretence to cover their retreat is the question. Prefer to think the latter is more plausible, however, a few days will tell.

May 30. Daylight finds our Regt. snug enough in the ditches near Banks Ford. The Yanks are busily engaged in throwing up earthworks, but as they are not ready yet, hence our Regt. came back to breakfast. There was but little or no news the balance of the day, but many grapevine reports and piney woods suggestions as to what is culminating in the future. No news from Vicksburg today. Am getting anxious to hear from that quarter.

May 31. Was again called to get ready to march at a moment's warning and rest on arms till daylight (At 12 o'clock) Learn the 11th Regt. went down to see what was the occasion. The Yanks were very busy near Banks Ford felling timber, etc., so as to use the canal as breastworks. Had preaching today at 10 A. M. by Rev. Mr. Bell of Alabama and was to have a sermon in the afternoon by Mr. Renfro but the wind has blown down the arbor. Late in the evening went to view the Yanks. They are busily galloping round.

June 1. All things are very quiet this morning. Strengthened our picket last night by sending 10 men and 1 sergeant from each co. Mr. A. Barber and J. B. B. came in today. Left home a week ago today. They bring good news, wheat crop very good. Harvesting had already begun before they left. Received a letter from Kate stating she . . new biscuit for breakfast on Sunday morning before they left (24). The health of the country was very good. No new cases of small-pox up to that time.

June 2. Have had another quiet night. At last everything seems to have returned to its former sluggishness of ordinary camp duties. Brig. drill, etc. Arranged the papers for J. B. Bell substituting J. J. H. Mr. Barber is listed on the same for *Lawler*. Our Regt. went out on picket this evening. See a good many blue bellies herd their horses on the other side of the river. No news from Vicksburg very reliable. Still hope eager, lays hold of every little item however small.

June 3. Took a stroll with Mr. Barber and Boatright along our picket line. Could see about Banks Ford a good many Yankees what they had been doing for several nights that had caused the trouble in our camps for the last few nights, the



timber has all been felled between the canal and river so as to prevent our getting across, also to use the canal as a ditch. While down there a lady on horseback came down to the ford accompanied by two officers. Our boys exchanged papers, etc., while on post.

June 4. All quiet and still this morning. Drilling in Bat. etc. . from orders and inquiries look for a move soon, and as I have not heard from my application offered my resignation this morning favorably endorsed by Col. Forney. About 12 o'clock M. . received an order to fall in quick and go to Banks Ford. Was off immediately. Marched out on the high hills in plain view of the enemy and then filed off into the woods. Remained an hour or two and returned to camp without any loss this time.

June 5. Some appearance of rain this morning. All things remain very quiet. Other artillery has come in and taken position between this and Banks Ford. We are again becoming anxious to hear from Vicksburg. Heard nothing yesterday. Cannonading opened pretty brisk below Fred. about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 6 P. M. and ceased in an hour. About 9 P. M. received orders to cook two days' rations, pack up and be ready to move at a moment's warning. Was trying to sleep and was of course disturbed. Many reports are to the future movements.

June 6. All astir this morning but did not move until  $\frac{1}{2}$  after 7 A. M., then the Regt. went down near Fred. Took position with T. H.'s wagon and ordinance and medical wagons. Went out on the plank road, thence toward Fred. halted within  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Went in search of the Regt. Afternoon. Found it was in a wood between ————— and Dr. Taylor's. Strolled down toward Fred. before finding it to the heights where I had a beautiful view. Yankees appear very busy. Hear an occasional report from their guns, even see them.

June 7. Cleared off quite cool after the shower yesterday evening. Everything quiet up to 7 o'clock A. M., when the Yanks fired a gun or two below Fred. answered by one still below. Strolled down to the heights on the left of the plank road to where our Regt. was on picket. (Dr. Taylor's, thence came to Fred.) The whole Regt. fills this space. Found our

Co. at the Factory. Co. E. from there to town. Went down through towards the Fitzgerald place, etc.

June 8. All things appear as they were. Across the river they keep up appearances and a might drumming over there. Went down to the Gen. Anderson's quarters after my last set of papers, got them approved there and withdrawn thence. While there went down on the heights, had a splendid view. Could plainly see what Yankees that have come over. They seem to be entrenched, still the knowing ones do not think they are going to make a fight on this side of the river. 'Tis said Gen. Longstreet is crossing above and below Culpepper Ch. today.

June 9. Clear and quite cool this morning, everything is as quiet as ever. Still a considerable drumming could be heard last night and this morning over among them seemingly disturbed Yanks. The best judges here think they are keeping up appearances here while their main force is gone to meet Gen. Longstreet or are preparing to get further. Firing is heard a long way off up the river early this morning. Obtained a pass to Rich. of Dr. Taylor, got L. H. to carry me down to Guinen (?) station was *directed*. Got a passport and set out on 2 P. M. train. Arrived Rich. at 5 P.M.

June 10. Fine morning. News was cheering from Vicksburg. Learn Gen. Stuart met the Yanks yesterday near Culpepper C. H. and drove them back across the river. My friend Dr. Clark and myself went in search of my old application for a transfer, also concerning my resignation. No papers have yet arrived. Have to send my resignation back and let it take the regular course to Gen. Hill thence to Gen. Lee. Strolled around the city a little looking at the [ ? ] of the city. Learn Jim Stuart had a desperate Cavalry fight yesterday. Over 300 prisoners came in.

June 11. Cloudy and warm this morning. News from Vicksburg by an officer of ours who escaped from the Yanks is cheering. The Yanks say as Johnston is in their rear, sudden death awaits them in front and annihilation in rear. Sent my resignation to Col. Forney by Mr. Killough Co. B. 10th Ala. Wrote to Kate, Josh. Morriss and Tom Coleman which kept



looking very fine and generally in good order. Strolled around town and passed the time rather dull. Met two members from M. D. Boil.

July 16. Warm, still clear and very dusty. Met Col. Caldwell just from the Army of Northern Va. Left the Regt. yesterday at Chancellorsville en route for Culpepper. He went with me to look after my first lot of papers for the purpose of making application direct to the War Department (at the suggestion of Col. Withers). Obtained my papers at *last*, made out my application but too late, the office closed about twenty minutes before we got there. Went down to the Navy Yard.

June 17. Set about the matter of business (tendering resig.), at 11 o'clock A. M. got a hack. Dr. Clark and myself went up to War Department, had an interview with Judge Campbell who informed us I would have to go before a board here. Immediately sought one and found it only meets Mondays and Fridays, hence am out on that *hook* until day after tomorrow. Called on Mr. Peebles who has the appointment of Post Q. M. of our District, perhaps make me some propositions. Strolled around town, felt bad and restless of *course*.

June 18. Terrible hot day. News from Winchester is very cheering capture of Hilroy (2) and nearly all his forces, etc. Nothing from Vicksburg of any importance, begin to have some uneasiness. Late news on the bulletin board is that Port Hudson has been attacked 27 times and last time our forces followed them and spiked their siege guns and our forces [ ? ] both there and at Vicksburg had plenty of provisions and were in good spirits. Found our boys Russell and Pope at Hayns Factory Hospital. T. F. Russell was not doing so well. Pope was tolerable.

June 19. Had a fine rain last night and this morning, the air is very much cooled. Went before the board was *burst*ed. Recommended to wait on my old application of resignation but got my friend P to take my application for transfer and my new or direct application of resignation to Col. Withers who promised to give my final discharge tomorrow. Took a stroll afternoon in search of Lt. Calhoun, found him at last.

Wishes to go with me home. Will wait until Monday if we cannot get off sooner.

June 20. Cloudy and very pleasant this morning. Strolled down to Capitol Square to await the hour of 10, saw that a cabinet shop on Franklin St. near the Square had been burned since six o'clock this morning. Ventured into the War Department, to my surprise and admiration was soon furnished my final papers looked after and final settlement. Thence to passport office, thence to Messrs. Hill and Nofleet and bought \$2,050 worth of tobacco. Arranged Lt. Calhoun and my bag — and all other preparations to leave. News from all directions good especially Gen. Lee.

June 21. Sabbath. Cloudy and misting rain. Arrived at the Petersburg Depot in good time. Set out at 6 o'clock to Wilson, arrived there at 3½ P. M. Set out thence to Warsaw at 4 P. M. The train was very much crowded. There has been some rain along the road, hence the dust not added to our crowded condition. Nothing occurred of any note. Crops generally look well. Wheat is generally ripe and being cut in several fields but full night came on us long before reaching Goldsboro, run slow all the time.

June 22. This morning at 2 o'clock arrived at Warsaw where I was crowded out of the stage running from this place to Fayetteville hence have to lay over here twenty-four hours. Strolled around and spent the time best I could. In the afternoon went out on the plank road, gathered some wortle berries, the great staple of this state, especially at this season of the year. The citizens of place and vicinity are daily expecting a raid of the Yanks but are but little troubled.

June 23. Set out this morning at 2 o'clock in a hack for Fayetteville, arrived at 2 P. M. After dinner went in search of Mr. Geo. McNiel. Found him a pleasant old gentleman but slow. Went down with him to his mill. They were going ahead making thread, suiting, etc. He said he would consider on my proposition until morning. Went to my hotel. The (left ) house got supper, took a smoke and retired for the night for I was very tired and sleepy.



June 24. Beautiful morning, ever memorable day this, two years ago left my home for the seat of war in Va. Learned after being referred from Mr. McNiel to Mr. Haul, thence to Geo. W. Williams Co. that the thread and cloth trade was no go. Strolled back to my hotel. Met several acquaintances of Mr. Thrift, Bledsoes, Formans and Freemans. Spent the evening tolerable pleasant but became anxious to be travelling as my mission was out. Some rain this evening.

June 25. Raining and quite cool. Set out at 8 o'clock A. M. for the boat, got there in good time. Set out down the river at 8½ very small boat indeed and luckily was not crowded. Arrived at Wilmington at 11½ o'clock P. M. Remained on board the balance of the night. This is a very narrow and muddy little river. Saw but very few farms and but few ferries. Presume the people in this country do their visiting across the river in bottoms as they are very plenty. This the place for whortles.

June 26. Find myself this morning at the wharf of Wilmington just below where the boat ferries over passengers and freight from one R. R. to the other. Saw two gun boats and several seagoing vessels. One captured here the other day supposed to belong to the Yankees. See lots of cotton around here and going in. Set out at 6½ o'clock A. M. for Kingston 171 miles. Arrived in due time (7 o'clock P. M.), took the Branchville train at 7½, arrived at 12 P. M. Saw plenty of corn in silk and tassel, plenty of rain.

June 27. Arrived in Augusta at 5 o'clock A. M. See a good deal of building going on here, Confederate I presume. Set out for Atlanta at 7 A. M. Very warm and cloudy. Plenty of rain, in fact, too much from Wilmington on thus far. A Union point the ladies have dinner prepared every day free for soldiers to any disabled 'tis on board. They (the ladies) go down to Greensboro, there meet the other train and fold back. Arrived at Atlanta at a ¼ to 7 P. M., remained 30 minutes and set out for West Point, rain all along.

June 28. At daylight found ourselves in 30 miles of Montgomery. Soon a desperate rain came on us, all the flats were covered in water, by then we got to town. Soon after we ar-

rived, the rain ceased. After breakfast went to express office there, learned my tobacco had not been received. Gave instructions to have it shipped to Selma. Learn after the boat arrived (11 o'clock A. M.) that we could not get off until 8 P. M., however, left the hall and went down and engaged passage. Set off down the river at 8½ P. M.

June 29. Fine morning, had a good night's sleep. Feel very much refreshed. The river is very muddy and rising. Fear we are having too much rain for the crops, however, up to the present corn is looking fine which is almost the only growing crop in Ala. Arrived at Selma also too late for the train (11 A. M.) See a great many men on the streets but few acquaintances.

Notes in the back of the book:

Page 1.

Travelling expenses back	\$ 2.00
From Rich. to Petersburg and Wilson	6.00
On Omnibus	1.00
thence to Warsaw	6.00
" " Fayetteville	8.50
" " Wilmington	10.00
" " Kingsville	10.00
" " Augusta	4.00
On Omnibus	.50
thence to Atlanta	8.00
" " West Point	5.50
" " Montgomery	4.25

Page 2.

Sheeting per yd. 75	1210
Eating expenses from Richmond home	
first day	2.50
Sec. " & hotel	6.50
third "	1.50
4th & 5th & hotel	11.00
6th & 7th	8.00

Page 3.

Camp 10th Ala.  
June 9th 1863Pass Capt. John Oden Co. K. 10th Ala.  
Regt. to hospital at Richmond.W. Taylor  
Surgeon  
10th Ala. Regt.Geo. W. Williams & Co.  
Fayetteville, N. C.

Page 4.

May 15th 1863

Surg. Gaston

This will be handed to you by Capt. Oden of the 10th Ala. Va. G. who appears before the "Divis Med. Examiners" on certificate of disability. In my opinion he will not be again fit for field service. Though eminently qualified for the duties of the position for which he applies.

He is anxious to get his papers forwarded as soon as possible.

Very respectfully  
W. Taylor  
Surgeon  
10th Ala. Va. G.

Page 5.

Capt. Oden and Mr. Hunt of the 10th Ala. Regt. have permission to return to the wagon train tonight.

May  
1st  
1863  
J. G. Montgomery  
Asst. Surgeon  
10th Ala. Regt.

Capt. Oden and Sergt. Brasher of the 10th Ala. Regiment have permission to follow the Regiment at will as they are both unwell from wounds.

May 1st  
1862  
W. Taylor  
Surgeon  
10th Ala. Vol.Approved  
W. H. Forney  
Col. 10th Ala.

Page 6.

Money received to carry home	
S. Hunt	\$1,000.00
L. M. Wilson	500.00
R. H. Johnson	20.00
A. N. Crowson	20.00

Left camp with only \$30.00 it Crowson & Johnsons

Michael Mizzles	
Received at Hospital	18.00

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10 Boxes Mayo's bb Crimps \$1.00	
1190	\$1,190.00
1 Box Solace 20 @ \$3	60.00
12 Kedins Refur. Choice 264 @ 77	203.28
5 Boxes P. B. 315 150	472.50

Page 7.

Richard E. Cross  
Lancaster, N. H.  
5th Regt.

Make inquiry for Jeremiah Dumas  
Society Hill Macon City, Ala. of Dr. Taylor

H. H. Long  
Hagerstown, Md.

W. L. Small  
Hagerstown, Md.

Chas. G. W. Macgill, M. D.  
Hagerstown, Md.

Miss Emma F. Brent  
Baltimore, Md.

LT. DAVID MONIAC, CREEK INDIAN:  
FIRST MINORITY GRADUATE OF WEST POINT

by

Benjamin Griffith

On September 18, 1817, one of the unlikeliest cadets ever to enter the United States Military Academy at West Point became the first Indian to be admitted to the Academy. He was David Moniac, then fifteen years, eight months of age, who had traveled from a Lower Creek village on Pinchona Creek, near the trail which had become the Federal Road in the present Montgomery County, Alabama. He had come by way of Washington City, where he had been tutored for a brief period by an Irishman named John McLeod.<sup>1</sup>

Even with his transitional period of instruction, the culture shock must have been startling for young Moniac. At about the age of fifteen, as had all boys in his Creek village, Moniac had probably undergone the rite of passage that initiated him into manhood. During the ceremony, which could last from twelve days to eight moons, the youth was isolated from the rest of the community. Other than the ritual roots and herbs, he ate little except a few spoonfuls of a gruel made from coarsely ground corn. On the first day he also ate two handfuls of Sou-watch-cau, a bitter root which had the effect of intoxicating and temporarily maddening. He also boiled the leaves of this hallucogenic plant in water and drank the tea-like liquid. The purpose was to stimulate visions, rendering the candidate more receptive to the teachings of the leader who instructed the youth in all that was considered proper for him to know. At a later period in the initiation, the young man drank the possau, a drink made from boiling the button snakeroot, a potent emetic that induced violent vomiting and hence further purgation. Near the end of the ceremony, the candidate burned corn cobs and rubbed the ashes over his body. He then sweated under blankets and finally went to the river for a ceremonial cleansing, now purified from the pollution of

<sup>1</sup>Peter A. Brannon, "David Moniac," *Arrow Points*, XIII (1928), 41.



juvenility.<sup>2</sup>

On the banks of the Hudson, far from the Tallapoosa and Alabama Rivers that he knew so well, Cadet Moniac must have been acutely puzzled at the mores, attitudes, and alien culture of his fellow cadets. He may not, however, have been surprised by the then-mild hazing of lower classmen; for public humiliation was one of the principal ways in which Creek mothers instilled discipline in their sons. If physical punishment was needed for a minor infraction, it was administered by lightly scratching the boy's dry skin with a sharp, pointed instrument. This "dry-scratching" was particularly humiliating because it left abrasions or light scars on the skin for several days or weeks so that all could see and taunt the child about them.<sup>3</sup>

Cadet Moniac, in the fencing classes at West Point, probably had a less anxious attitude about blood-letting than did his classmates. Creek Indian mothers, for serious offense, would scratch the legs and thighs of their sons with the jawbone of a gar fish or tooth of a snake until they bled. The Creeks believed that this practice had both a physical and emotional efficacy. It was thought to loosen the skin and give a pliancy to the limbs and, as one anthropologist put it, "the profusion of blood that follows the operation serves to convince the child that the loss of blood is not attendant with danger or loss of life," so that "when he becomes a man or a warrior he need not shrink from an enemy."<sup>4</sup> Who knows what story is concealed in the crisply worded Post Orders of March 24, 1822, which lists Moniac among a number of cadets in the First Class who have been "organized in a fencing section under the direction of Sword Master Thomas every morning from sunrise to breakfast in front of the North Barrack."<sup>5</sup>

Moniac's arrival at the Academy as the stone North Bar-

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<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Hawkins, *A Sketch of the Creek Country in the Years 1798 and 1799* (Collections of the Georgia Historical Society (Savannah, 1848), III, 78-79.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville, 1976), 324.

<sup>4</sup>John R. Swanton, *Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy*, Reprinted with the permission of the Smithsonian Institution (New York, 1970), 363.

<sup>5</sup>Post Orders No. 2, 1822-1823, U. S. Military Academy Archives.

rack was being completed<sup>6</sup> coincided also with the beginning of a new era at West Point under its fifth superintendent, Sylvanus Thayer, who, in his term of office from 1817 to 1833, introduced a system of rules, a set curriculum, and disciplinary measures that are basically unchanged to the present day.<sup>7</sup> When Thayer came to the Academy, he perceived that firm admissions standards were an urgent necessity. Although a law had been passed in 1812 mandating an entrance examination and requiring applicants to be over fourteen years old, the law was ignored for political expediencies, and the Corps included twelve-year-olds, a one-armed boy from Pennsylvania, a married cadet from the same state who brought his wife along, and scores of cadets who had remained in the Corps for years without progressing beyond the first year's course of study. Thayer dismissed forty-three of these latter cadets, "most of whom," he wrote to the Secretary of War, "are deficient in natural abilities and all are destitute of those qualities which would encourage a belief that they can ever advance."<sup>8</sup>

Thayer followed the admissions standards precisely, rejecting between 30 and 60 per cent of the applicants despite an entrance examination so easy that one cadet was asked merely to define a fraction, read two and one-half lines from a history book, and write a dictated sentence on the blackboard.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Thayer's most important contribution, however, was the instituting of a merit roll in which cadets were graded on all their activities, on the drill field as well as in the classroom, and assigned a mathematical average which gave each cadet a place on the Order of General Merit within his class. It was this final merit ranking that dictated a cadet's career assignment, whether he would be sent to the much coveted Corps of Engineers or the less to be desired cavalry, artillery, or infantry.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Carlisle Boynton, *History of West Point and its Military Importance During the American Revolution and the Origin and Progress of the United States Military Academy* (New York, 1863), 255.

<sup>7</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore, 1966), 63.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 82-83.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

Cadet Moniac's progress toward graduation, as recorded on the merit roll, was not without impediment. At the completion of his first year in June, 1818, he was turned back to the following Fourth Class by his request. This is somewhat surprising, for at that time Moniac ranked 19th in a class of 29 in the Order of General Merit. At the end of his second attempt at the Fourth Class, he ranked 48th in a class of 117; but the advantage of twice-told lectures was temporary, and as the weaker students dropped out of the struggle, Moniac drifted to 59th in a class of 87 in this third class year, 48th of 53 in the second class year,<sup>11</sup> and 39th of 42 in the final year. His graduation standing was 39th of 40.<sup>12</sup> The final examination, which primarily determined the graduation standing, was an ordeal in which each cadet was questioned for at least five hours by the entire faculty and the distinguished Board of Visitors. The oral examination covered all the courses in the four-year curriculum.

Cadet Moniac earned his highest ranking in conduct, 15th of 42 in his overall standing for the four years in that category. His best academic subjects were mathematics, where he ranked 27th, and tactics, where he was placed 33rd. In French he ranked at the bottom; in philosophy he out-ranked two other cadets in his class, in engineering only one.<sup>13</sup> Outside the classroom Moniac did make modest advancements in the military hierarchy. Battalion orders of August 30, 1820, appointed him Fourth Sergeant in the Second Company of cadets. On June 22, 1821, he was appointed First Sergeant, but the Battalion Orders seven days later carried the concise and unexplained statement, "Cadet Moniac resigned as First Sergeant of the Fourth Company of Cadets."<sup>14</sup> One wonders what pressures there were that led to his stepping down from a position of leadership.

The *Register of Delinquencies* at the Academy indicates that Cadet Moniac's few peccadillos mostly involved absenteeism and unauthorized visiting during study hours. He was certainly

<sup>11</sup>Academic Records, U. S. Military Academy Archives.

<sup>12</sup>Merit Roll of the First Class, June, 1822, Post Orders, No. 2, U. S. Military Academy Archives.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>Post Orders No. 1, 1817-1822, U. S. Military Academy Archives.

well within the limit of 200 demerits in a single year which led to a cadet's automatic dismissal.<sup>15</sup> He was five times listed as "absent in study hours," once each absent from Tattoo, Tactics, and Drill, and once "In bed after morning roll call." In his last two years at West Point he was cited five times for "visiting in study hours." He was once cited for "Neglect of duty in failing to sign the pay rolls" and once for "Disobedience of orders in not signing the pay rolls."<sup>16</sup> At another time Moniac, for failure to sign the pay roll, is cited along with other cadets in the Post Orders for May 1, 1820. "These Cadets did not sign the pay roll," the orders read, "because their pay was passed directly to their creditors. The Cadets were ordered to sign the pay roll by seven o'clock on the evening of May 1, at which time they received their pay, which was then applied to the payment of their debts."<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1818, David Moniac took part in a movement to oust the hot-tempered Captain John Bliss, Commandant of the Corps, whose duty it was to discipline the cadets and assign demerits. When, on November 22, Bliss grabbed a cadet from the ranks and "shook, jerked, and publicly damned" him, the Corps responded by electing a committee of five cadets to represent their grievances to the Superintendent. Moniac received no votes in the election, but one of the grievances was drawn up in a affidavit form and signed by D. Moniac and P. McCormick, stating that "we do hereby certify on honor, that on or about the 26th of October, 1818, Captain John Bliss, without the least possible provocation, did throw stones at us, and at several other cadets of the Military Academy."<sup>18</sup> The committee of five was dismissed from the Academy by Thayer as a mutinous consortium, and his action was later upheld by a court of inquiry and a congressional investigation.

One brief incident concerning Moniac at West Point is recorded in a book by Josiah Quincy. Former President Adams, Quincy relates, was visiting West Point to review the cadets,

<sup>15</sup> Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 74.

<sup>16</sup> Register of Delinquencies, 1819-1822, U. S. Military Academy Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Post Orders No. 1, 1817-1822. U. S. Military Academy Archives.

<sup>18</sup> *An Expose of Facts Concerning Recent Transactions Relating to the Corps of Cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York* (Newburgh, N. Y., 1819), 14.

and the aging ex-President, then in his eighties, was being shown the corps. Major Worth, one of the Academy officials, "made an unsuccessful attempt to induce Moniac, the Indian Cadet, to be introduced to Mr. Adams and the ladies. At last he gave this up, saying, 'He is too bashful.'" The Major, apparently sensitive to Moniac's unwillingness to be singled out, added: "I have myself been taken for the Indian all along the road. People would point to me and say, 'Look there! there's the Indian!'"<sup>19</sup> If "*the Indian*" was Moniac, one gets a graphic picture of what life was like as an ethnic curiosity at the Military Academy at that time. Cadet Moniac must have been singled out often by the crowds when the Cadet Corps made its annual summer marches to Hudson, N.Y., in 1819, Philadelphia in 1820, and Boston in 1821. These marches were begun by Superintendent Thayer to gain publicity for the developing Academy, but the official reason given was to improve the health of the Cadets and add to their practical experience. The fancy uniforms, the martial music, and the expert precision of the marching cadets excited and impressed the citizens in towns and villages along the march routes.<sup>20</sup>

Following his graduation Moniac served for five months as a Brevet Second Lieutenant in the Sixth Infantry and then abruptly resigned his commission on December 31, 1822.<sup>21</sup> Many young graduates were resigning, for in 1821 Congress had exercised one of its periodic cuts in the size of the army, and the Academy was graduating more officers than the army could use. President Madison suggested that the extra men might well retire to private life, where they could impart the benefits of their training to the state militia,<sup>22</sup> and a large percentage of Brevet Second Lieutenants followed his advice. Moniac settled near his uncles, David Tate and William Weatherford, the latter the famous "Red Eagle," the adversary of Andrew Jackson in the Creek War of 1813-14. He married Mary Powell, the cousin of Osceola, the Seminole leader. From

<sup>19</sup>Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past: From the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston, 1883), 92.

<sup>20</sup>Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 81-82.

<sup>21</sup>Capt. George W. Cullum, comp., *Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y., from March 16, 1802, to January 1, 1850* (New York, 1850), 113.

<sup>22</sup>*American State Papers: Military Affairs*, V, 350.



the time of his resignation until 1936, Moniac was a respected cotton farmer and breeder of thorough-bred race horses,<sup>23</sup> a passion he had inherited from his grandfather, a red-haired Scotsman named Charles Weatherford. He built a home near Little River in Baldwin County, Alabama. As one of his kinsman, Tom Tate Tunstall, wrote of him in a manuscript now in the United States Military Academy Archives: "He was a high toned chivalric gentleman & cordially esteemed by all who knew him. There was really nothing in his quiet life to distinguish him from the majority of the country gentlemen of his time & day."<sup>24</sup>

Jacob Rhett Motte, an army surgeon who knew Moniac during the Florida War, had a different assessment of Moniac's term of civilian life, attributing the resignation of his commission to a visit to his family, which "revived in his breast in all its former force the roving disposition of his people. Since then he has ranged with native freedom over the woods and plains, until the recent outbreak of the Indians afforded him an opportunity of showing his gratitude to the government which had fostered him in his youth."<sup>25</sup>

David Moniac apparently had few Indian racial characteristics. Dr. Motte tells of journeying, with Moniac as an escort, through the friendly part of the Creek nation and, passing through one of the towns that was still inhabited, was introduced by Moniac to his father, "a venerable old Indian," the respected Creek leader, Sam Moniac. Dr. Motte wrote that he was unaware, until that moment, that Moniac was "other than a white man."<sup>26</sup> This is understandable, for both David Moniac's grandfathers were white, Charles Weatherford, a Scotsman, and William (or Dixon) Moniac, referred to quaintly as a "Hollander." One of his grandmothers was a full-blooded Indian, the other a half-Indian of the Tuskegee tribe.

Such racial mixtures were not uncommon, for white traders

<sup>23</sup>T. T. Tunstall, "David Moniac, Civil History," Manuscript in U. S. Military Academy Archives.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journal Into Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field During the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838*, ed. James F. Sunderman (Gainesville, Fla., 1953), 22.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

and adventurers had begun filtering into the Creek nation at a very early date. Charles Weatherford moved in among the Creeks shortly after the Revolution.<sup>27</sup> Precise records are lacking to indicate the percentage of Caucasians in the Creek nation, but it was probably less than ten per cent. The writer and visitor to the Creeks Caleb Swan set the white population in 1790 among the Creeks at 300, a number, he added, "sufficient to contaminate all the natives."<sup>28</sup> Historical accounts of the Creeks are liberally sprinkled with such names as Burgess, Cornell, Galphin, Grizzard, Kinnard, McIntosh, McQueen, Milfort, Moniac, Perryman, Sullivan, Walker, and Weatherford. There is, however, nothing to indicated that the Creeks discriminated against the whites or their mestizo offspring. Since descent was determined through the female line rather than by the paternal method used by white society, the father's ethnic background meant little to the Creeks.<sup>29</sup> The Indians, as Peter Farb points out, had a well-established system of adopting new members into the tribes. Often prisoners of war were adopted by Indian families to replace husbands or sons who were battle casualties. The adopted person was completely integrated into his new society, having a new set of parents, kinsmen, ceremonial societies, and allegiances transferred to him. When a white settler took an Indian wife, he acquired the support of her whole tribe.<sup>30</sup> The anthropologist John R. Swanton analyzed the cases of thirty captive whites, males and females equally divided. He found an unusually high percentage of social success; three or four men became chiefs and about the same number of women became wives of chiefs.<sup>31</sup>

Indian women were attractive to the North American settlers from the beginning. Within a few years after Virginia was settled in the early Seventeenth Century, more than forty male colonists had married Indians. "Indianizing," or "adopting

<sup>27</sup>Thomas S. Woodward, *Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians* (Montgomery, Ala., 1859), 88.

<sup>28</sup>Henry R. Schoolcraft, ed., *Historical and Statistical Information, Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1851-57), V, 263.

<sup>29</sup>John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman, Okla., 1938), 6.

<sup>30</sup>Peter Farb, *Man's Rise to Civilization: The Cultural Ascent of the Indians of North America*, Rev. Second edit. (New York, 1978), 250.

<sup>31</sup>John R. Swanton, "Notes on the Mental Assimilation of the Races," *Journal of Washington Academy of Sciences* (1926), 498.

the ways of the Indians," became such a threat to the dissolution of the early settlements that the Colony of Virginia instituted severe penalties against going to live with the Indians,<sup>32</sup> and Cotton Mather preached against "Indianizing." The Creek Indian agent, Benjamin Hawkins, said of the Indian wives that "if the concurrent testimony of the white husbands can be relied upon, the women have much the temper of the mule, except when they are amorous, and then they exhibit all the amiable and generous qualities of the cat."<sup>33</sup> Michel Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur, in his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), wrote: "There must be in the Indian's social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of these Aborigines having from choice become Europeans."<sup>34</sup> As Peter Farb summarizes it, "Whites who had lived for a time with Indians almost never wanted to leave. But virtually none of the 'civilized' Indians who had been given the opportunity to sample White society chose to become a part of it."<sup>35</sup> David Moniac is a good example of such an Indian who sampled white society — had indeed achieved, in his commission from West Point, one of the highest accolades the white society offered — and then turned his back upon it.

When the Florida War began in 1836, however, Moniac returned to military service in August as a Captain in the Mounted Creek Volunteers. There were 750 Creek Indians in the regiment, including two chiefs, Jim Boy and Paddy Carr, all mustered and paid as militia in the service of the United States. These Indians wore white turbans to distinguish them in battle from the enemy, and the Seminoles hated this white symbol of the Creeks' defection to their enemy. Captain John Lane, of the Second Regiment of the United States Dragoons, was mustered as the commanding officer and promoted to the rank of colonel. Moniac was the only officer designated as Indian among the thirteen officers in the regiment.

The Mounted Creek Volunteers reached Fort Brooke, on

<sup>32</sup>Farb, *Man's Rise to Civilization*, 249.

<sup>33</sup>Hawkins, *A Sketch of the Creek Country*, III, 8.

<sup>34</sup>Dutton edition, 1957, 209.

<sup>35</sup>Farb, *Man's Rise to Civilization*, 249.

Tampa Bay, on October 5, 1836, and proceeded immediately into the interior, reconnoitering widely and engaging in spirited skirmishes with the enemy. Joining forces with General Richard Keith Call, the Creek Volunteers moved out from Fort Drane on November 10 and crossed the Withlacoochee River, thirty miles distant, on the thirteenth.<sup>36</sup> On November 15, David Moniac was promoted to the rank of Major.<sup>37</sup> Although the records are not specific, the promotion must have come as a reward for action in an engagement on the previous day, when a Seminole encampment was attacked with strong resistance. Eleven of the United States troops were killed or wounded in the forty-minute encounter before the Seminoles gave ground and retreated.<sup>38</sup>

On November 20, a detachment of regulars joined with General Call's troops, and at dawn the next day the entire force moved on Wahoo Swamp, where the enemy was massed in large numbers, well prepared for an attack. As Lt. Col. Pierce, the commanding officer of the detachment of regulars described the scene: "After marching about five miles, and within four hundred yards of the Wahoo Swamp, the enemy appeared in force at the edge of the hammock which skirts the swamp, and by their war-whoops and other indications showed themselves in readiness to give battle." The attacking troops made a rapid charge immediately upon reaching the hammock. Firsthand observers reported that the engagement was characterized by a general whooping, yelling, and discharge of rifles, with the Seminoles firing and retreating tree by tree. The white-turbaned Creeks, in their ancient manner, yelled as they moved toward the Seminoles. Past the hammock, a typical wooded, slightly rounded Florida knoll, the attacking troops found themselves in dense scrub, wading through mud and water as deep as four feet. They soon reached the main stream of the Withlacoochee and found the Seminoles now ensconced in force along the opposite bank, about ten yards distant. They were well concealed by logs and stumps, and several withering volleys had little effect on them. From their superior position, they were able to open a galling fire on the soldiers and the Creeks.

<sup>36</sup>John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, Facsimile of the 1848 edit. (Gainesville, Fla., 1964), 162.

<sup>37</sup>Collum, *Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy*, 113.

<sup>38</sup>Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, 162.

In order to determine whether or not the Withlacoochee was passable, Major Moniac was ordered to sound the depth of the water. As he moved forward to measure it, he was cut down by a deafening blast of enemy fire.<sup>39</sup> One account states that his body was pierced by 67 bullets.<sup>40</sup> It is ironic that Osceola, the chief who commanded the Seminole attack that killed Moniac, was a cousin of the slain major's wife, Mary Powell Moniac.

Thus the scion of one of the most celebrated of Indian families was cut down in his prime. His father, the "venerable old Indian" to whom Dr. Motte had been introduced on the march south, was Sam Moniac (also called Manac). He had acted as an interpreter for Alexander McGillivray, the famous Creek leader, on a visit to George Washington at New York in 1790 at which an important treaty was signed. Thomas S. Woodward, whose *Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians* includes many references to his friend, Sam Moniac, says he "was always looked upon as being one of the most intelligent half-breeds in the Nation." He added, "I have often seen a medal that General Washington gave Moniac. He always kept it on his person, and it is with him in his grave at Pass Christian."<sup>41</sup>

David Moniac was a nephew of William Weatherford, the leader of the attack on Fort Mims and the staunch foe of Andrew Jackson in the Creek War of 1813-14. His great uncle was General Alexander McGillivray. Another uncle, David Tate (for whom Major Moniac was named), had been taken north as a boy by General McGillivray and placed in a school — said to have been under the supervision of General Washington — where he studied for five years. After the death of McGillivray in 1793, Tate was sent to Scotland to complete his education before returning to the Creek nation to take possession of the property which was left to him by the General.<sup>42</sup>

Major David Moniac's life as a soldier was brief and vio-

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<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>40</sup>Brannon, "David Moniac," 41.

<sup>41</sup>Woodward, *Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians*, 94.

<sup>42</sup>J. D. Dreisback, "Weatherford — 'The Red Eagle,' " *Alabama Historical Reporter*, II (February, 1884), 7.



lent, but Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup, commander of the Georgia and Alabama troops in the Florida War, said of him that he "was as brave and gallant a man as ever drew sword or faced an enemy."<sup>43</sup> Entering West Point when he and the Academy, which had opened on July 4, 1802, were approximately the same age, David Moniac, the first minority graduate of that institution, began, at fifteen years and eight months of age, a truly remarkable odyssey between two American cultures, an odyssey tersely memorialized in the four words beneath his name in the Cadet Register: "Was a Creek Indian."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, II (April, 1884), 2.

<sup>44</sup>Cullum, *Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy*, 112.

## THE PRELUDE TO POPULISM IN ALABAMA

by

Karl Rodabaugh

The storm of political protest that swept across Alabama in the 1890s and temporarily ripped apart the Democratic party originated in large part from economic and political conditions of the previous two decades. By the 1890s, most Alabamians did not easily join movements which challenged the Democrats, so unusual circumstances had to arise to prompt the widespread political revolt that took place in the turbulent nineties. Before the Democratic party could be torn asunder, profound dissatisfaction with the existing order of things had to develop and serious political polarization had to occur. This required a chain of events: First, the sources of discontent needed to be felt, recognized, and brought together as elements in a relatively simple explanation of the existing order which could form a basis for political protest; then a framework of political organization had to be developed, appealing through easily recognized symbols to any groups sharing a sense of disadvantage and resting on a platform consisting of programs designed to alleviate the distress; finally, the Democratic party had to appear either as a barrier to the development of relief programs or as an original cause of the distress — or both. All these contingencies actually occurred as the prelude to Alabama's political revolt of the 1890s.

The effects of weaknesses in Alabama's agricultural economy helped produce discontent. The Civil War disrupted Alabama agriculture and the postwar economy lacked the resources needed to solve the state's agricultural problems.<sup>1</sup> One disgruntled farmer later remembered the "deplorable condition [of Alabama agriculture] at the close of the war, our

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<sup>1</sup>A helpful survey of the problems of postwar adjustment is Theodore Saloutos, "Southern Agriculture and the Problems of Adjustment, 1865-1877," *Agricultural History* XXX (April, 1956), 58-76. For another view of postwar southern agriculture in general, see Stephen J. DeCanio, *Agriculture in the Postbellum South: The Economics of Production and Supply* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1974). See also, Grady McWhiney, "The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture," *Alabama Review*, XXXI (January, 1978), 3-32.

property destroyed, farms laid waste, our larder lean and bare."<sup>2</sup> Another dissatisfied farmer, who joined the Southern Farmers' Alliance in the 1880s, expressed his sentiments in doggerel:

I fout four years with Bill Forney,  
And considerin, we done powerful well;  
But we all come home busted —  
Niggers, mules, all gone to hell.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, many farmers who had turned to soldiering lay beneath the sod of distant battlefields, while many others returned home with maimed bodies to once-productive farms which sometimes lay in ruins or more often needed extensive care and expensive repairs. Yet Alabama's banking and credit facilities could not satisfy the needs of the economy, labor could be labeled at best only an unstable factor, and transportation networks no longer existed in many areas to link together the state's markets.<sup>4</sup> Despite the hardships they faced, most farmers who returned to their lands after the war took up about where they had left off; as their chief money crop, they planted cotton — the staple that held their faith and about which they had a considerable degree of knowledge. However, cotton farming after the war proved increasingly unprofitable, thereby compounding the farmers' woes.<sup>5</sup> In

<sup>2</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, April 19, 1888.

<sup>3</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, December 19, 1888.

<sup>4</sup>Livingston *Journal*, November 22, 1889; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, November 12, 1885; Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York, 1905), 253-255, 279-280. On the freedmen and agricultural labor in postwar Alabama, see John B. Meyers, "Reaction and Adjustment: The Struggle of Alabama Freedom in Post-Bellum Alabama, 1865-1867," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXXII (Spring and Summer, 1970), 5-22; "The Freedmen and the Labor Supply: The Economic Adjustments in Post-Bellum Alabama, 1865-1867," *Ibid.*, XXXII Fall and Winter, 1970), 157-166; "Black Human Capital: The Freedmen and the Reconstruction of Labor in Alabama, 1860-1880" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1974); Sylvia H. Krebs, "Will the Freedmen Work? White Alabamians Adjust to Free Black Labor," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXXVI (Summer, 1974), 151-163; Peter Kolchin, *First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama's Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Westport, Conn., 1972). See also, James L. Roark, *Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1977), chapters 3, 4, and 5.

<sup>5</sup>Guntersville *Democrat*, September 3, 1881. The best study of postwar cotton production is Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925* (Lexington, 1968), 249-295.

fact, the overall status of Alabama agriculture in the last third of the nineteenth century generally remained so low that many farmers constantly faced the specter of failure. During "the seventies," an Alabama journalist later wrote, "loss was almost a rule and dissatisfaction became universal."<sup>6</sup> Declining cotton prices, the lien system, inefficient marketing arrangements, poor credit resources, and wasteful farming methods headed a long list of serious problems which confronted Alabama's cotton farmers. "That agriculture is tottering upon its foundation can be questioned by none. Its depressed condition is heralded throughout the land," said George Motz, a leader in the efforts to improve farming in the state, in an address before the Alabama State Agricultural Society.<sup>7</sup> When the farmers considered the reasons for their problems, some of them reached conclusions that turned out to be illusory but many others reached valid conclusions based in part on a sensible analysis of their economic condition.

Many Alabama farmers pointed to the credit lien system as both a powerful cause and effect of the state's agricultural distress.<sup>8</sup> "Under the blighting influence of the credit system our people had been forced to the conclusion that farming would not pay," reported the *Tuskegee News*.<sup>9</sup> In the usual lien arrangement, a farmer (most often a tenant farmer) pledged a portion of his next crop to either the landlord providing at least the land or the merchant providing the year's supplies. The system offered a way of extending credit to farmers who lacked collateral (other than the crop itself) and it also proved

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Also useful is Robert L. Brandfon, *Cotton Kingdom of the New South: A History of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta from Reconstruction to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1967).

<sup>6</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, August 8, 1889, quoting *Birmingham Age-Herald*.

<sup>7</sup>Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*, August 22, 1888.

<sup>8</sup>A useful recent study of the topic is Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, "Debt Peonage in the Cotton South after the Civil War," *Journal of Economic History*, XXXII (September, 1972), 641-669. Also helpful are Joseph Reid, "Sharecropping as an Understandable Market Response: The Post-Bellum South," *Ibid.*, XXXIII (March, 1973), 106-130; "Sharecropping in History and Theory," *Agricultural History*, IXL (April, 1975), 426-440; Margaret Pace Farmer, "Furnishing Merchants and Sharecroppers in Pike County, Alabama," *Alabama Review*, XXIII (April, 1970), 143-151.

<sup>9</sup>*Livingston Journal*, November 22, 1889, quoting *Tuskegee News*. For a defense of the credit lien system, see *Livingston Journal*, November 29, 1889.

to be a factor in the solution of the postwar agricultural labor problem. As the system often worked, landlords maintained accounts with local merchants from whom the landlords' tenants could receive supplies, with the cost of the supplies including interest charges which sometimes soared above 100 percent to be taken out of the tenants' share of the crops.<sup>10</sup> To keep a close watch on crop production and to avoid dealing in perishables, merchants demanded that farmers agree to grow cotton as a condition to be met before entering into a lien agreement. "The merchants," one farmer declared, "will not advance supplies on hay, oats, wheat, corn, potatoes, or any other product of the soil save and except cotton, and not having the cash to follow the system of farming most pleasant to him, [the farmer] must, perforce, accept the only alternative left open to him and plant the staple demanded by the merchant."<sup>11</sup> This forced the farmers to grow much more cotton than was called for by the world market conditions.

While cotton production was being over-emphasized in Alabama, cotton from new sources flooded the world market and the price of the staple began a steady decline.<sup>12</sup> From a peak of 17.9¢ per pound in 1871 the price dropped to 8.59¢ by 1878, leveled off around 8¢ from 1878 until 1890, and then pitched downward until it hit 5.7¢ in 1898, when the cost of production was 7¢ per pound.<sup>13</sup> As the price of the staple fell, cotton farmers — large numbers of whom faced unpaid liens — sought a way of increasing their returns, so they grew more cotton. This caused acreage and production to increase rapidly from 1865 to 1900, even though the return to the farmer often was too small for him to pay off his lien. "Here it is demonstrated year in and year out that raising cotton don't pay," grumbled Samuel Lawrence, a dissatisfied cotton farmer who lived near

<sup>10</sup>See Guntersville *Democrat*, December 31, 1885; Livingston *Journal*, January 31, 1889.

<sup>11</sup>Livingston *Journal*, November 8, 1889, quoting Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*.

<sup>12</sup>*Eleventh Census*, 1890, I, Agriculture, 44-45, 276; *Eighth Census*, 1860, Agriculture, 2; Guntersville *Democrat*, September 3, 1881. On the topic of cotton overproduction, see also Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, "The 'Lock-In' Mechanism and Overproduction of Cotton in the Postbellum South," *Agricultural History*, IXL (April, 1975), 405-425; Stephen J. DeCanio, "Cotton 'Overproduction' in Late Nineteenth-Century Southern Agriculture," *Journal of Economic History*, XXXIII (September, 1973), 608-633.

<sup>13</sup>Sheldon Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama* (Princeton, 1969), 6.



Greensboro.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the Alabama cotton farmer often found himself trapped by the lien in a cycle of increasing production and declining prices.<sup>15</sup>

Sometimes a farmer's energy and spirit were consumed while trying to pay off his lien, thereby making poignant the heavy human costs of the "ruinous" and "suicidal" lien system. By the late 1880s, "the average Alabama farmer" was described as a "discouraged [man] who now for twenty years has been pulling the 'bell cord over a mortgaged mule!'"<sup>16</sup> Because tenant farmers were chained to the lien debt, they lacked control over their own affairs and often had little initiative to improve their situation. Moreover, a tenant could not readily secure a better lien from another merchant because the tenant had no collateral for a lien other than his future cotton crop—which already had a lien on it. In addition, legal penalties existed for anyone who broke a lien agreement. Large numbers of tenant farmers therefore had no choice but to make agreement after agreement, year in and year out, with merchants who forced them to grow cotton, even marketed their crops, and often limited their production of foodstuffs in order to reduce competition with store supplies. As a result of these circumstances, thousands of tenant families existed on very limited diets with practically no money left over for "extras" such as newspapers and school supplies. A lifetime of hard work by the average Alabama tenant farmer gained him nothing more than "a log cabin with a mud and stick chimney, brogan shoes, and [a] mean living for his wife and children."<sup>17</sup> Among the members of such families, disease easily took its toll and the average level of education remained extremely low, even for the postwar South. Tenancy also proved to be a constant source of fear and insecurity for non-tenant farmers.

In addition to the tenants and the large landholders, Alabama contained two other main categories of farmers: the independent white small farmers who often owned a little land plus the more prosperous white small farmers, or "yeomen." Outside the black belt region of Alabama, a common type was the self-sufficient or independent white farmer — sometimes

<sup>14</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, January 20, 1887.

<sup>15</sup>See Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, September 18, 1884.

<sup>16</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, January 20, 1888.

called the "poor white" — who often owned or simply squatted upon a small parcel of land. This group typically worked the poorest lands in the counties with relatively few black residents, producing mostly cotton and corn. On the surface, the independent "poor white" farmer's existence at a harsh level of self-sufficiency did not appear much different from that of the tenant (and the two types have been lumped together under the heading "poor whites"). But thus far the independent "poor white" farmer had managed somehow to escape the chains of the lien system — an accomplishment worth more than brief notice. A step above the independent "poor whites" were the more prosperous white landholding small farmers — labeled the "yeomen farmers." They generally lived in the same areas and produced the same crops as the independent "poor whites," but their farms, while modest in comparison with those of the large landholders, generally were larger and better than those of the "poor whites." As a result, the yeomanry's farms usually yielded a noticeable surplus for them to market. Amidst the agricultural crisis in Alabama in the late nineteenth century, however, both the independent "poor whites" and their more prosperous neighbors felt the stark horror of tenancy and the pains of the credit system gnawing at their vitals. Because the more prosperous "yeomen farmers" fared better than the independent "poor whites" and had more to lose, perhaps the yeomanry felt the threat of tenancy most keenly. Many members of this group feared that economic conditions in Alabama had given rise to "a system of landlords and tenantry that will make slaves of the farming class."<sup>18</sup> Probably because the "yeomen farmers" actively engaged in agricultural markets and knew more about the problems caused by declining prices, this group more quickly sought reasons for the "tottering" condition of Alabama agriculture and remedies for their distress.

Looking about themselves, Alabama's disgruntled farmers found many causes for their plight: Merchants and middlemen,

<sup>17</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, July 28, 1887, quoting Talladega *Our Mountain Home*.

<sup>18</sup>See Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, September 18, 1884; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism*, 26; James Agee and Walker Evans, *Three Tenant Families: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston, 1941), 119; R. Means Davis, "The Matter with the Small Farmer," *Forum*, XIV (November, 1892), 381; Theodore Saloutos, *Farmer Movements in the South, 1865-1933* (Berkeley, 1960), 1, 3-5. The quotation is from Athens *Alliance Banner*, April 26, 1888.

local courthouse rings and the Democratic party, cities and a materialistic, non-rural lifestyle, banks, the transportation system, trusts, speculators, manufacturers, the tariff, and the various levels of government all appeared to be working against the honest yeomanry who till the soil."<sup>19</sup> However, many contemporaries pointed to the farmers themselves as a large part of the problem, and not without considerable justification.<sup>20</sup> The Alabama farmer's nature certainly contributed to the agricultural distress because the average farmer had little knowledge of the marketing system, improved machinery, or even better agricultural methods. National economic developments and growing competition from large farms in the West called for improved financial and business management; farming in America was becoming a big business linked up with an increasingly interdependent national economy and this required that even Alabama's small farmers change a great deal.<sup>21</sup> Yet many of the state's farmers felt that large numbers of their colleagues hurt not only the others but also the agricultural economy because they lacked the ability to farm in a business-like manner, failed to modernize their methods, and refused to diversify their crops. "You might as well undertake to demonstrate that the moon is made of green cheese," complained Hector D. Lane, editor of the *Huntsville Weekly Mercury* and later Alabama's Commissioner of Agriculture, "as to convince the average Alabama farmer that his salvation depends on something else than the planting and raising of cotton."<sup>22</sup> Other writers advocated agricultural self-sufficiency through diversification, called for "a radical change in the methods" of Alabama's farmers, and predicted economic betterment "if [only] our brother farmers could see farther ahead and sow more wheat at home and quit those northern flour markets [and] quit having our smoke houses and corn cribs at the north."<sup>23</sup> One editor declared: "The time is come when southern farmers must diversify their corps. Cotton has kept them down long enough,

<sup>19</sup>Ashville *Southern Alliance*, September 14, 1899; *Livingston Journal*, June 2, February 17, 1887, February 9, December 13, 1888; *Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, April 17, December 25, 1889; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, March 31, 1887; *Athens Alliance Banner*, April 12, 26, May 31, January 20, February 23, 16, March 8, 1888.

<sup>20</sup>*Mobile Register*, May 4, 1890, citing *Florence Herald*.

<sup>21</sup>On the transformation of farming into big business, see Jimmy M. Skaggs, *An Interpretive History of the American Economy* (Columbus, Ohio, 1975), 55.

<sup>22</sup>*Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, March 6 1889.

<sup>23</sup>*Calera Shelby Sentinel*, May 19, 1887, June 11, 1885.

and they must now down cotton.”<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the most common explanation of the farmers’ failure to follow what seemed to many editors to be excellent advice centered on the individualism and “conservatism of the country [that have] heretofore existed in the agricultural classes.”<sup>25</sup> There is no doubt that many farmers — who certainly were conservative and suspicious of innovation — remained tied to old methods of cotton production, responded slowly to notions of interest group organization at a time when other interests were making themselves heard through effective organization, and even refused to accept overproduction of cotton as a cause of their predicament. But while the character of many farmers and their failure to react properly to changes in farming certainly contributed to the deterioration of agriculture, many other factors such as the nation’s monetary policy and high railroad rates also worked against them in a manner which induced most farmers to look for the enemy outside their ranks.

National economic policies and the effects on agriculture of a changing national economy worked generally to the disadvantage of southern farmers. After the Civil War, the federal government carried out many financial policies which benefited creditors and large financial interests.<sup>26</sup> For example, silver was demonetized in 1873, thereby reducing the amount of money in circulation, and the Resumption Act of 1875 put greenbacks at parity with gold, causing the value of the dollar to rise while farm prices fell.<sup>27</sup> In addition, efforts

<sup>24</sup>Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, March 17, 1887.

<sup>25</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, 1886. See also, Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 10, 1887.

<sup>26</sup>Professor Charles A. Beard and his disciples have interpreted late nineteenth century political history in a dualistic manner as a struggle between the farmer and the capitalist over economic policies, but Professor Irwin Unger rejects both their dualism and their economic determinism in favor of a more complex explanation. See Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (new revised and enlarged edition, New York, 1944); Irwin Unger, *The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879* (Princeton, 1964). For an interpretation that rejects Beard’s implication that “monolithic” capitalist forces dominated economic policymaking but accepts “an economic determinism even more complete,” see Robert Sharkey, *Money, Class, and Party: An Economic Study of Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 1959).

<sup>27</sup>A complete discussion of the Resumption Act of 1875 as well as information on the demonetization of silver can be found in Unger, *The Greenback Era*, 249-285, 374-407, 329.



by the federal government to retire the national debt by redeeming bonds made the bonds rise in value, which caused national banks to sell large quantities of the bonds they held; and because these banks issued maximum dollar amounts of national bank notes based on the par value of the bonds they held, the federal government's retirement of its bonds resulted in the withdrawal from circulation of large amounts of national bank notes, thereby further reducing the circulating medium just when an inflationary influence was needed. A deflationary cycle resulted, producing a bad reaction among state banks and adversely affecting agricultural prices. State banks, which could not serve local market areas as well as at one time due to the limiting effect of the ten percent federal tax on state bank notes, could not lend up to their former capacity because of rising dollar values and eastern obligations. As the value of the gold dollar rose gradually until in 1890 it commanded over two-and-one-half times its 1865 level of purchasing power, the appreciation of the dollar meant that farmers not only received lower prices for a relative amount of farm produce, but also had to produce more to pay their outstanding debts. As Alabama farmers felt the first pains of lower prices, they cried for credit to keep going and to increase production; but credit was more and more difficult to obtain, in part because the establishment of banking facilities in the state's agricultural regions lagged far below the requirements. Moreover, most investment capital which came into the South went to business and industry, causing agricultural interest rates to increase even further. By the 1880s, the *Montgomery Advertiser* and other papers commented on the lack of currency in the state's farming regions while Alabama's hard-pressed farmers held local mass meetings where they passed resolutions against "the present rate of interest which is usury." Although the need for a greater supply of money in circulation clearly existed in Alabama, the national trend went in the opposite direction: whereas in 1873 there had been \$339,000,000 in national bank notes in circulation, by 1891 the supply had fallen to \$168,000,000.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup>John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party* (Minneapolis, 1931), 87-95; William Warren Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion: Agrarianism in Alabama, 1865-1896* (Baton Rouge, 1970), 14; *Livingston Journal*, January 12, 1888; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, May 10, 1888; *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, November 12, 1885; *Athens Alliance Banner*, April 26, 1888; C.



Fluctuating currency supplies and speculation in agricultural futures added to the farmers' problems. Due to speculation, glutted markets, and changes in the currency supply, the dollar's value rose at marketing time and agricultural prices dropped; then after the farmers sold their produce, the dollar's value fell and prices increased.<sup>29</sup> When Alabama farmers reflected on the commissions of middlemen, the relatively high prices exacted by corporations for farm supplies and machinery, the profits of speculators, and the extortionate credit rates, they found it easy to conclude that the mysterious cycle of prices and the currency supply was a conspiracy.<sup>30</sup> When the farmers came together and talked about their common plight, one farmer observed, "we began to realize the fact that merchants, railroads, manufacturers, syndicates and every other profession was [*sic*] organized against us and that we were helpless and without protection."<sup>31</sup> At all junctures, the mechanisms of the economy seemed to operate against them, leading farmers throughout the South to conclude that the creditor class "had conspired to enact and perpetuate the 'Crime of '73,' the Resumption Act of 1875, and other measures that restricted the nation's supply of money."<sup>32</sup>

The operation of Alabama's railroads also generated the seeds of discord. With the help of state, county, and city governments, Alabama's railroads were rebuilt and expanded after the Civil War. But the process occurred too quickly and too extensively, and the effects of this situation as well as fraud, over-extension of credit, and watered stock caused the state's railroads to fail in the 1873 panic. By the mid-seventies, all Alabama railroads were insolvent. Within a

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Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951), 186.

See also, William E. Laird and James R. Rinehart, "Deflation, Agriculture, and Southern Development," *Agricultural History*, XLII (April, 1968), 115-124.

<sup>29</sup>Hicks, *The Populist Revolt*, 89, 91.

<sup>30</sup>See Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, April 12, 1888; Athens *Alliance Banner*, January 20, 1888; W. Scott Morgan, *History of the Wheel and Alliance, and the Impending Revolution* (Ft. Scott, Kans., 1889), 511-514.

<sup>31</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, May 31, 1888.

<sup>32</sup>Fred A. Shannon, *The Farmers' Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897* (New York, 1945), 314-315. Professor Unger makes it clear that the demonetization of silver was not a conspiracy, but he also points out that the farmers definitely blamed their problems on "scapegoats" such as the bankers. See *The Greenback Era*. 390-391, 209.

few years, however, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (L & N) reorganized many lines and secured control of enough of the state's railway network to permit it to set transportation rates in Alabama without serious competition from other lines. The L & N computed rates on the basis of various competitive points along its lines. These "basing points" — including such places as Selma, Montgomery, and Mobile — were located on waterways or were served by other railroads in addition to the L & N, so they were among the few places enjoying beneficial rates due to the competition. On the other hand, non-competitive points received rates determined by computing the sum of the rate for a nearby competitive point plus the rate from there to the non-competitive point. This meant that the rate for a bale of cotton from Montgomery to Mobile (both of which were competitive points) fluctuated between 75¢ and \$1.25, while the rate from Greenville (a non-competitive point about one-fourth of the way between Montgomery and Mobile) to Mobile was \$2.30 a bale. Throughout the state, railroads charged higher rates per mile for shorter hauls than for longer hauls. Moreover, as agricultural traffic decreased in proportion to the tonnage traffic of Alabama's growing industries, areas that were predominantly agricultural in their economies offered less impetus to competition among railroads so they suffered higher rates than other areas of the state. Despite the fact that Alabama farmers direly needed a cheap means of distributing their crops, the state's railroads failed to provide an equitable system of transportation geared toward serving the needs of the farmers. To the contrary, the railroads charged just what the traffic could bear.<sup>33</sup>

When the inequitable rate structure fostered demands for reform, railroads became a bigger and bigger factor in Alabama politics. The state legislature established the Alabama Railroad Commission in 1881, but with only weak rate-setting powers and without any real means of balancing the rate struc-

<sup>33</sup>A. B. Moore, "Railroad Building in Alabama During the Reconstruction Period," *Journal of Southern History*, I (November, 1935), 421-441; William E. Martin, *Internal Improvements in Alabama* (Baltimore, 1902); *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, 1886; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, March 31, 1887; James F. Doster, *Railroad in Alabama Politics* (University, Ala.: 1951), 4-5, 8, 6n, 62-63, 69-70, 67, 107-111; Trade Centers and Railroad Rates in Alabama, 1873-1885: The Cases of Greenville Montgomery, and Opelika," *Journal of Southern History*, XVIII (1952), 177-180, 170-172, 174.

ture. In fact, the commission protected the favorable position of competitive trade centers and lacked the powers to bring about a redress of grievances for non-competitive points.<sup>34</sup> Efforts in the mid-eighties to increase the commission's regulatory powers brought the L & N Railroad actively into Alabama politics. By using extensive lobbying and widespread propaganda and by relying on the willingness of those agricultural areas which needed railroad transportation to please the L & N, the railroad shaped a political force — oiled by the free pass and other advantages — which crumbled the movement to strengthen the commission.<sup>35</sup>

Although the L & N did not then gain absolute control of Alabama politics, during the next decade it experienced "little trouble with the Alabama legislature, where the few unfriendly proposals were checked by the railroad lobby with quiet efficiency."<sup>36</sup> Despite continued complaints from newspaper editors and others about the inequitable rate structure, the L & N's propaganda and political power produced a situation where even those editors who voiced their complaints the loudest added quickly that "no single agency has contributed as much to the upbuilding of Alabama as this railroad."<sup>37</sup> Moreover, many editors sought to encourage the railroads by calling for the legislature to abolish the railroad commission.<sup>38</sup> The commission, however, was even less of a problem for the railroads than the legislature. The commissioners spent their time going throughout the state in a "patriarchal manner" seeking solutions to conflicts arising from minor public complaints over station accommodations and the like; they "urged a conciliatory spirit between the aggrieved party and the railroad" and they made every effort not to burden the state's lines.<sup>39</sup> Their instincts were "those of the politician desirous of remaining in office."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Allen J. Going, "The Establishment of the Alabama Railroad Commission," *Journal of Southern History*, XII (1946), 375-377; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, 1886; Doster, "Trade Centers and Railroad Rates," 184-185.

<sup>35</sup>James F. Doster, "Railroad Domination in Alabama, 1885-1905," *Alabama Review*, VIII (July, 1954), 186, 193; *Railroads in Alabama Politics*, 20-25.

<sup>36</sup>Doster, "Railroad Domination in Alabama," 188.

<sup>37</sup>See, for example, Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, 1886, April 7, 1887.

<sup>38</sup>See, for example, Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 10, 1887.

<sup>39</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, November 11, September 16, 1886.

<sup>40</sup>Doster, *Railroads in Alabama Politics*, 32.

Burdened by high railroad rates and low farm prices and convinced that the economy was being manipulated to their disadvantage, Alabama farmers responded in large numbers when the Grange (officially the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry) entered the state. Eight subordinate granges, organized by a deputy from Mississippi, appeared in several West Alabama counties in 1872. Evander McIver Law, a gentleman farmer and ex-Confederate major general, soon took the lead in establishing the Alabama State Grange. Like General Law, most Alabama grange leaders espoused conservative views on politics and economics, came from the upper class, enjoyed the benefits of education, and held large landholdings and other financial assets — they were “men of wealth and prosperity.”<sup>41</sup> However, the state’s small farmers — apparently the more successful ones — made up the bulk of the Grange’s following. Under General Law’s guidance, 129 delegates met in Montgomery, November 27, 1873 and completed the organization of the Alabama State Grange. By 1875, 680 local granges had been established across the state, with about 17,000 members.<sup>42</sup>

Established to “reform and elevate . . . agriculture, by making it independent and profitable, and its followers intelligent and prosperous,” the new farmers’ order emphasized organization above all else.<sup>43</sup> Included within its goals, however, was the desire to help the embattled farmers in “a conflict of cultures” — between “Jeffersonian agrarianism and a new industrial urbanism” — which the nation’s farmers seemed to be losing.<sup>44</sup> According to the Grange, it gave the farmers the opportunity to come together in grange halls where they could discuss farming and educate themselves in the changing requirements of their occupation. Grange leaders assumed that as the farmers learned more about their plight, they would

<sup>41</sup>William Warren Rogers, “The Alabama State Grange,” *Alabama Review*, VIII (April, 1955), 105.

<sup>42</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 66-67; D. Sven Nordin, *Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange, 1867-1900* (Jackson, 1974), 29. The Alabama State Grange lagged behind those of other South Central states in membership, perhaps because the national Grange appealed to the strong anti-railroad bias of most southern farmers while most Alabama grangers had mixed feelings about railroads. See Going, “Alabama Railroad Commission,” 367-368.

<sup>43</sup>*Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Alabama State Grange, 1874*, 11.

<sup>44</sup>Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, 3.



become convinced of the great need for concerted action among the tillers of the soil. At first this meant that organization was desired essentially to stimulate further organization, but once group action became easy to the farmers they would engage in cooperative buying and selling in order to achieve economic relief. Perhaps as its most important contribution the Grange made organized action a mania among many of its members, although it also produced social and educational benefits.<sup>45</sup> A recent study of the granger movement "gives credence to the statements made repeatedly by grange leaders that their order was primarily a social and educational fraternity for farmers and their families rather than a medium for political and economic activities."<sup>46</sup> The new farmers' order established schools, papers, and agricultural journals — all of which emphasized scientific methods of farming; it held social functions where isolated farmers and their wives came into closer contact with their world; and it hosted frequent lectures where speakers exhorted those in attendance to join the movement for greater crop diversification, increased grain and stock production, and soil improvements.<sup>47</sup> In addition, said one neutral observer, "the state agricultural department . . . owes its existence" to the Grange.<sup>48</sup> Both nationally and in Alabama, the leaders of the order promoted an organized effort to decrease cotton production.<sup>49</sup> This suggestion had little effect in Alabama, however, because the bulk of the grangers in the state seem to have felt that the underlying goal of the order was to devise a method of increasing the staple's price, not decreasing its production. Whatever faith the majority of Alabama grangers had in the idea of organization apparently stemmed from their hope that group action would improve existing conditions — chiefly the price of cotton — and not from a desire to bring about fundamental changes in agriculture by deemphasizing cotton production.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 68-69.

<sup>46</sup>Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, viii.

<sup>47</sup>See Montgomery *Southern Plantation*, I (1875), II (1876), III (1877), *passim*; Robert Partin, "Black's Bend Grange, 1873-77: A Case Study of a Subordinate Grange of the Deep South," *Agricultural History*, XXXI (July, 1957), 55.

<sup>48</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, August 8, 1889, quoting *Birmingham Age-Herald*.

<sup>49</sup>Salutos, *Farmer Movement*, 39; Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 70.

<sup>50</sup>For a view of the Granger movement as "essentially reactionary, trying to segregate the farmer from society, raising his standard of living without contamination from alleged city vices and industrial development," see H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse, 1969), 367.



Many grangers might not have recognized progressive proposals for changing or improving agriculture as the fundamental goals of their order, but the Grange did succeed in focusing the farmers' attention on agricultural problems, promoting some changes in farming methods, and sponsoring several attempts at organized action.<sup>51</sup> In 1874 the Tuscaloosa County Grange recommended shifting from cotton production to corn in order to avoid debt, suggested that a way be found for getting better prices for supplies from the merchants, and condemned the lien system as a large factor in causing farm distress.<sup>52</sup> The Alabama State Grange openly opposed the lien system and established cooperative business ventures that were designed to end the leechings of middlemen, commission agents, and merchants. Such action brought the grangers into conflict with the merchants. Planters who joined the Grange had their mortgages foreclosed and grange cooperatives faced intense competition from established businesses. Many local granges organized boycotts to force the merchants to lower their prices, but these efforts were doomed to failure by the farmers' dependence on the merchants for supplies. By 1875, virtually all cooperative endeavors had succumbed to overwhelming opposition, signaling the failure of the goal of economic relief through organization and precipitating the rapid decline of the granger movement in the South.<sup>53</sup> In addition, it soon became clear that the order had not provided a remedy for the debt situation: "despite all that the Grange could do," one Alabama historian has concluded, "the sharecropping and renting systems became more firmly entrenched . . . , while 'King Cotton' retained his sovereignty."<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the Grange's organized actions served largely to help illuminate the stranglehold of the lien and cotton cycle in Alabama agriculture.

The Alabama State Grange exhibited mixed tendencies in its actions and statements pertaining to the state's railroads. Wanting regulation after the example of the West and Midwest

<sup>51</sup>See *Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Alabama State Grange, 1874*, 9-10.

<sup>52</sup>Houston Cole, "History of Populism in Tuscaloosa County" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1927), 40-41.

<sup>53</sup>*Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Alabama State Grange, 1874*, 10-11; Rogers, "The Alabama State Grange," 111-114, 116-117; Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, vii.

<sup>54</sup>Rogers, "The Alabama State Grange," 110.

but cautious lest they might discourage railway expansion, the grangers generally avoided serious criticism of Alabama lines. During the peak of the granger movement, however, the impact of railroads on society received notice and some action resulted: the 1875 Alabama constitution followed the Grange-influenced Illinois constitution in declaring railroads to be common carriers; it also made it a legislative duty to enact laws regulating freight and passenger rates and prohibiting rate discrimination; in addition, the 1875 constitution prohibited the consolidation of parallel or competing lines and made it possible for the legislature to enact laws against free passes.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, "the railroad commission," a Birmingham *Age-Herald* correspondent later claimed, "owes its existence absolutely to the grange movement."<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the growth of the L & N's political influence in the 1880s prevented the realization of any far-reaching benefits from railroad legislation adopted during the granger era.

The Grange did not seek gains for agriculture through direct organized political action, but it still exerted a considerable influence on Alabama politics. Reflecting the power and influence of the Grange's leaders, most of whom had political connections and participated in politics, the legislature enacted many laws such as the one that tightened the planters' control over their tenants and another that created new tax measures benefiting large landholders by granting them tax exemptions which did not apply to smaller farmers.<sup>57</sup> In fact, "most of the agricultural legislation during this period was directed toward improving the position of the landowner and planter rather than that of the small farmers."<sup>58</sup> However, a few laws promised to affect a larger number of farmers, including legislation prohibiting the destruction of forests, establishing the Alabama Railroad Commission, and providing for the State Department of Agriculture.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup>See *Constitution of Alabama*, 1875.

<sup>56</sup>Clanton Chilton View, August 8, 1889, quoting Birmingham *Age-Herald*.

<sup>57</sup>Rogers, "The Alabama State Grange," 107-108; Allen Johnston Going, *Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, 1874-1890* (University, Ala., 1951), 98-99.

<sup>58</sup>Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 103.

<sup>59</sup>See Rogers, "The Alabama State Grange," 105. "The Grange honestly did try to sever partisanship from its programs," concludes the most recent historian of the order, "and it did denounce almost every dissident move aimed at forwarding either parties or would be office seekers." See Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, 182.

The political record of the Grange reveals a breach between its leaders and its followers and characterizes the order as a conservative institution. Perhaps the main reason this happened was because the Grange "let in moneyed men [including merchants and middlemen] who . . . soon got control."<sup>60</sup> As an agency representing the views of the larger and more prosperous farmers, the order served as a sort of limited or embryonic interest group organization. If the Grange had not been so conservative and had not overlooked the needs of the smaller farmers, it might have done more to pave the way for the later appearance in Alabama of a more completely developed interest group organization with wider appeal — the Southern Farmers' Alliance. As State Master Hiram Hawkins said, however, the Grange was recognized throughout the state as a "great conservative . . . organization."<sup>61</sup> One example of its conservatism was the manner in which it assisted the Democrats in the restoration of white rule in Alabama in the 1870s.

Although it was anything but radical and it never had a cohesive program aimed toward the achievement of set goals, the order did seek to improve the status of Alabama's farmers even if it did so in ways which almost never included any action showing alienation from the traditional forms of Alabama society. This did not stop the Grange from advocating some things — such as the establishment of the railroad commission — which revealed a small but important shift in philosophy toward "an extension of the arm of government into new spheres of activity."<sup>62</sup> Nor did the order's conservatism prevent it from supporting actions which exacerbated "the tension between town and country" that had long existed in America, or from flirting in a small way with new monetary ideas, thereby heralding the later significant shifts in thought by many Democrats from sound money "doctrines" to soft money "theories."<sup>63</sup> In addition, the Grange's secret oaths and ritual probably heightened agrarian cultural unity and otherwise acted as a "binding force" among the farmers by propelling them "into a

<sup>60</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 1, 1888. See also, Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, December 6, 1888.

<sup>61</sup>Rogers, *The Onc-Gallused Rebellion*, 76.

<sup>62</sup>Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, 149.

<sup>63</sup>Unger, *The Greenback Era*, 202, 292. Unger notes that "rural fears served as fertile ground for the soft money Democracy." *Ibid.*, 196.

euphoric state of excitement and imagination" which overcame the "sterility and colorlessness" of other farm groups.<sup>64</sup> To have been a real challenge to the existing social, economic, and political order, however, the granger movement would have had to attract a much larger and more alienated following in support of a more radical program. Even if the Grange did not do this, it did cause many farmers to recognize the benefits of group action and it opened their eyes to the potential of organized political action.

Alabama politics underwent many important changes in the same general period that the granger movement was preparing many Alabama farmers to promote their interests through organized action and pressure group politics. Before the Civil War a vigorous two-party system existed in Alabama, with Whigs and Democrats opposing each other throughout the state.<sup>65</sup> After the war, however, Radical Republican control of the state gradually forced realignments among the members of the old parties. Democrats and former Whigs came together in the mid-seventies under the banner of white supremacy as the Democratic and Conservative party and "redeemed" the state from Radical rule.<sup>66</sup> The leadership of this new coalition — called the Bourbons — generally consisted of conservative members of Alabama society who were large planters and landowners, merchants, lawyers, bankers, or railroad men. Perhaps the least confusing, if not the best, way to approach an understanding of the word Bourbon is to adopt "the populist habit of using Bourbon as a generic term for the post-

<sup>64</sup>Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, 9-10.

<sup>65</sup>Although the Democrats enjoyed political supremacy in the state before 1860, the Whigs displayed considerable strength and attracted supporters from the various segments of Alabama society, not simply from the silk-stocking elite. See Grady McWhiney, "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama?" *Journal of Southern History*, XXIII (1957), 510-522. For a perceptive analysis of ante-bellum Alabama society, see J. Mills Thornton III, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, 1978).

<sup>66</sup>Goins, *Bourbon Democracy*, 1, 9-19; Thomas B. Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery in Alabama and the Lower South, 1860-1867," *Alabama Review*, XII (1959), 47-52; Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, *The Scalawag in Alabama Politics, 1865-1881* (University, Ala., 1977), 91-104. See also, Edward C. Williamson, "The Alabama Election of 1874," *Alabama Review*, XVII (July, 1964), 210-218. Significant recent assessments of Reconstruction historiography include Richard O. Curry, "The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877: A Critical Overview of Recent Trends and Interpretations," *Civil War History*, XX (September, 1974), 215-238; Robert Reid,



Reconstruction establishment.”<sup>67</sup> Because the Bourbons brought together within the same structure many of the diverse elements of the old parties, neither the reasons for the union of such “Procrustean Bedfellows” nor the new party’s positions on many economic and political issues were at all clear to many contemporaries. However, one Democratic newspaper explained the new coalition’s cohesiveness as follows:

The Democratic party . . . is composed of men of all shades of opinion upon what to [party members] are non-essential questions. All of this heterogeneous crowd came together . . . in 1868, not because they agreed upon any two [issues], but because [they] agreed upon the one great essential question, the preservation of State Government here in Alabama in the hands of the white race.<sup>68</sup>

The new political alliance was formed in a period when significant economic changes were affecting the state. A host of entrepreneurs were eagerly developing Alabama’s new iron industry and exploiting her mineral resources. Railroad promoters were rapidly increasing the miles of track in the state in order to serve the new sources of traffic created by mushrooming production of iron and coal. Although the 1873 panic temporarily stifled business growth in Alabama, by 1879 the state’s industries entered a period of tremendous growth and expansion. Only about \$500,000 was invested in the state’s iron mines in 1880, but by 1889 the sum had risen to over \$5,250,000. Moreover, production of iron ore jumped from 171,000 tons to 1,570,000 tons in the same period.<sup>69</sup> It is not

“Changing Interpretations of the Reconstruction Period in Alabama,” *Alabama Review*, XXVII (October, 1974), 362-381. See also, Allen W. Trelease, *Reconstruction: The Great Experiment* (New York, 1971); William R. Brock, *Conflict and Transformation: The United States, 1844-1877* (Middlesex, England, 1973).

<sup>67</sup>George Brown Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition in New South Politics* (Baton Rouge, 1975), chapter 1, quoting from 9. Another valuable discussion of the use of the term Bourbon is Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., “The Southern Bourbons Revisited,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LX (1961), 286-295.

<sup>68</sup>*Mobile Register*, February 5, 1887.

<sup>69</sup>Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 126-127; Saffold Berney, *Hand-Book of Alabama: A Complete Index to the State, with Map* (Birmingham, 1892), 456n, 456-457; Ethel Marie Armes, *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama* (Birmingham, 1910), 332, 335, 339, 340-342; John Bunyon Clark, *Populism in Alabama* (Auburn, 1927), 21-22.



Although the Bourbons espoused classical economic theories surprising that the state's fast-growing industries and their workers soon became significant factors in Alabama politics, and avoided overt connections of government with industry, many leaders of the Democratic party still felt that the state's industries received too much attention and too many advantages from the Bourbons. In fact, the rural elements of the party "denounced what appeared to them an increasingly favorable attitude of party and state leaders toward industrial progress."<sup>70</sup> One of the strongest statements in this regard came from Robert McKee, editor of the Selma *Southern Argus*, who feared that Alabama under the Bourbons fast was becoming a place where "corporations, and capital, and the lawyers they own, govern to enrich the few at the expense of the many."<sup>71</sup> When in 1885 a big boom began in the Birmingham area, disputes over economic policies soon emerged and "accentuated" the differences between "rural-agrarian" and "urban-industrial" elements within the Democratic party. This situation helped cause the deadlock at the 1886 Democratic State Convention, where "intra-party discord" came to a head until the various elements of the party compromised by going along with the nomination for Governor of Thomas Seay — a young "dark-horse" candidate from Greensboro.<sup>72</sup> Despite the convention's temporary success in smoothing-over the Democrats' differences, there still were plenty of Alabamians around after 1886 who "would call a mass meeting and give all promoters of industrial enterprises just twenty-four hours to get out of the State."<sup>73</sup> These people obviously did not share the devotion of many Bourbons to the "New South Creed" — or what has been described by one historian as a postwar "mythology" which the Bourbons "incorporated to buttress the new order."<sup>74</sup> For many Bourbons, the "new order" which they hoped would

<sup>70</sup>Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 46.

<sup>71</sup>Robert McKee to R. W. Cobb, August 23, 1883, Robert McKee Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery. See also the editorials by Ben Herr, another influential Democratic journalist, in the *Livingston Journal*, especially April 12, 1888. It is noteworthy that some elements of the Democratic Party looked upon McKee as the archetypal Bourbon. See *Huntsville Advocate*, September 7, 1881 and *Birmingham Chronicle*, December 16, 1886, cited in Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 46.

<sup>72</sup>Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 45, 48-49.

<sup>73</sup>*Livingston Journal*, April 12, 1888.

<sup>74</sup>Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition*, 21.

become reality was "a South which venerated its past, but sought a progressive future of industrial development and agricultural diversification."<sup>75</sup> To many contemporary Alabamians as well as many later historians, however, the Bourbons seemed willing to stress industrial development even at the expense of the state's agricultural interests.<sup>76</sup> The trend seemed clear: when Alabama's industries expanded the Bourbons cheered, but the defects of industry, the ills it caused, and its unsettling effects on the former agricultural emphasis of Alabama life apparently did not greatly trouble the majority of Bourbons. Yet what the Bourbons actually did in the form of overt action to create this impression was not as clear as their vocal support of the "New South Creed" and their loud applause for industrial development. In fact, the Bourbons carefully upheld the laissez faire philosophy which dominated economic thought in the period: Alabama's industries received little direct state aid from the Bourbons, whose other actions and policies generally reflected the same conservative tradition. Moreover, when the Bourbons took over the state government, they made economy the watchword, reduced the size of the government, and lowered the tax rates until in 1890 Alabama had the lowest rates in the South except for North Carolina.<sup>77</sup>

Several factors contributed to the Democratic party's success in keeping together under one roof such antagonistic elements as the rural-agrarians and the "promoters of industrial enterprises." Some of these included the strength of white

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.* See also, Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Baton Rouge, 1970).

<sup>76</sup>Robert McKee to R. W. Cobb, August 23, 1883, McKee Papers; Livingston *Journal*, January 27, 1887, April 12, 1888; Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*, January 16, 1889; Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 97; Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 45-49, 110-113. For comments applauding the Bourbons' concern for "industrial development," see, for example, Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, November 26, 1885. Professor C. Vann Woodward has concluded that southern farmers did not "seriously question the philosophy of the New Order" until the mid-eighties. See *Origins of the New South*, 176. Jonathan M. Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885* (Baton Rouge, 1978), says that Alabama society after the Civil War did not become a new order dominated by New South industrialists, for the conservative Old South planter class's supremacy generally remained intact with only a few "inadvertent" changes.

<sup>77</sup>Armes, *Story of Coal and Iron*, 225-256; Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 109-110, 45-48, 116-118, 126, 92; *Constitution of Alabama*, 1875; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 24 (misprinted as February 23), 1887; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 3, 1887.

supremacy as an ethnocultural issue, the political and institutional realities arising from the functioning of the party's loose-knit state-wide organization, and the broad appeal of traditional Democratic views on economics and politics. During the Jacksonian era, the economic and political principles of the Democratic party became the dominant American paradigm on such matters and soon attained the power of an official dogma in their hold on many people's minds.<sup>78</sup> This paradigm consisted of two basic elements: Adam Smith's economic doctrines and Thomas Jefferson's (or the Antifederalists') political doctrines. The main purpose of the first element was to promote competition and localize the economy while the primary purpose of the second element was to guard against dangerous centralization in the government.<sup>79</sup> Before the Civil War, of course, the localistic Jacksonian Democratic paradigm had faced some ideological competition in the arena of Alabama politics from the translocal Whig (or Hamiltonian) position, which stressed the need for a strong, central government to do such things as exercise control over the economy.<sup>80</sup> However, even if some former Whigs still kept their Hamiltonian principles after entering the Democratic party during Reconstruction, for many years the political situation in Alabama required that the new Bourbon coalition display at least temporarily a facade of support for the Democratic paradigm. Therefore,

<sup>78</sup>See Robert Kelley, *The Transatlantic Persuasion: The Liberal-Democratic Mind in the Age of Gladstone* (New York, 1969). On paradigm analysis as a method of historical investigation, see Gene Wise, *American Historical Explanations: A Strategy for Grounded Inquiry* (Homewood, Ill., 1973).

<sup>79</sup>For such views in Alabama, see Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, September 18, 1884; Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*, October 12, 1887, March 28, 1888, March 6, 1889; Livingston *Journal*, January 6, February 24, March 3 (citing Montgomery *Advertiser*), March 17, 24, June 9, May 12, 1887. A useful analysis of the thought of a few representative conservative Alabama leaders of this period is Hugh Charles Davis, "An Analysis of the Rationale of Representative Conservative Alabamians, 1874-1914" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1964). On Smithian economic principles, see Joseph Cropsey, *Polity and Economy: An Interpretation of the Principles of Adam Smith* (The Hague, Netherlands, 1957). On Antifederalist political principles, see Jackson Turner Main, *The Anti-Federalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788* (Chapel Hill, 1961); Cecilia M. Kenyon, "Men of Little Faith: The Anti-Federalists on the Nature of Representative Government," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., XII (1955), 3-43.

<sup>80</sup>On the Whig's principles, see Glyndon G. Van Deusen, "Some Aspects of Whig Thought and Theory in the Jacksonian Period," *American Historical Review*, LXIII (1958), 305-322.

the doctrines of Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson, without any effective ideological competition after Reconstruction, soon became something akin to an orthodox creed for many members of the new political coalition. Although at first the Democratic paradigm probably had less binding force than most contemporary observers thought, its effectiveness soon increased as more and more Whiggish Bourbons and backers of the "New South Creed" discovered the advantages to be derived for railroads and other large-scale enterprises from support of such traditional Democratic principles as laissez faire and limited government.

All this is not a refutation of the historical generalization that "Bourbon regimes never achieved monolithic unity either in philosophy or government," for the generalization definitely applies to Alabama.<sup>81</sup> There the Bourbon coalition consisted of many divergent groups which sometimes had serious difficulty in smoothing-over their differences.<sup>82</sup> One Democratic editor described his party as "a strange lot" comprised of many "discordant elements". Some favored federal and state aid to internal improvements while others did not; some supported a protective tariff which others opposed vehemently; some demanded stricter government regulation of railroads but others called for less of the same thing; some advocated prohibition and others strongly disagreed.<sup>83</sup> Historians also have divided the Democratic party into many conflicting groups: "Bosses," "Planters," "Conservatives," "Progressives," the "rural-agrarian" wing, the "urban-industrial" wing.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, contemporary observers predicted that continued industrial development and the related tariff issue would exacerbate the ideological differences between old Whigs and old Democrats until finally they would split up the new coalition into groups similar to the two old parties.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, other related ideological differences seriously threatened Democratic unity.

<sup>81</sup>The quotation is from Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition*, 15.

<sup>82</sup>For information on such factionalism in another southern state, see Daniel Merrett Robinson, *Bob Taylor and the Agrarian Revolt in Tennessee* (Chapel Hill, 1935); Roger Hart, *Redeemers, Bourbons, and Populists: Tennessee, 1870-1896* (Baton Rouge, 1975).

<sup>83</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, May 13, March 18, 1886.

<sup>84</sup>Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism*, chapter 10; Going, *Bourbon Democracy*, 45, 207.

<sup>85</sup>See, for example, *Livingston Journal*, March 10, 1887.



Opposite the proponents of the "New South Creed" stood those Alabamians who believed that improvement of the state's agricultural economy should be the top priority and that the New South should be a place where small farmers could enjoy the good rural life of the Jeffersonian "agrarian myth."<sup>86</sup>

Even if such differences made it unlikely that in a serious political crisis the new coalition could be held together by either the Democratic paradigm or the "New South Creed," the party still could be maintained at least temporarily by the binding force of white supremacy and by the political realities arising from the Democracy's structure. This was true in part because, as one historian has said, "voters were often more concerned with matters which impinged on their lives directly and which immediately challenged their personally structured value systems than they were with national [or even regional] problems whose direct salience was not clearly perceptible to them."<sup>87</sup> As an ethnocultural issue which stirred strong emotions, white supremacy was an important part of most white Alabamians' "personally structured value systems."<sup>88</sup> Unless a serious economic crisis like the depression of the 1890s allowed economic issues to capture the voters' attention, ethnocultural issues and all kinds of local matters usually dominated American politics in most places in the late nineteenth cen-

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<sup>86</sup>See, for example, Athens *Alabama Farmer*, September 5, 1888. For an example of a pro-agrarian editor's New South boosterism, see Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 15, 1888. A penetrating look at the split in Alabama society between those devoted to the "New South Creed" and those devoted to the preservation of the status quo is Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South*. On the "agrarian myth," see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R.* (New York, 1955), chapter 1.

<sup>87</sup>Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York, 1970), 18. For a criticism of Kleppner's methodology, see James Wright's essay in Allan Bogue, ed., *Emerging Theoretical Models in Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills, 1973).

<sup>88</sup>For examples of a typical white Alabamian's attitudes toward blacks as well as the political uses made of the white supremacy issue, see Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, July 30, 1885, May 27, 1886. Additional information on the impact of the white supremacy issue on Alabama politics can be gained from Williamson, "The Alabama Election of 1874." See also, Lawrence J. Friedman, *The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970); Guion G. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy," in Fletcher M. Green, ed., *Essays in Southern History* (Chapel Hill, 1949); Claude H. Nolen, *The Negro's Image in the South: The Anatomy of White Supremacy* (Lexington, 1967).



ture.<sup>89</sup> This state of affairs also contributed to the cohesiveness of the Alabama Democratic party by permitting it to avoid discussion of most matters which would have been divisive. Another unifying factor was the party's structure. The Democracy was a loose alliance of county courthouse rings held together by such political and institutional realities as the manner in which many of the party's political practices served the interests of local politicians. One of these was how the governor normally used his power of appointment in filling such local offices as register in chancery, solicitor, coroner, or justice of the peace. After the members of a county courthouse ring decided among themselves who should be appointed, a delegation often visited the governor to inform him of their choice; then the governor appointed the person nominated by the local ruling clique.<sup>90</sup> This sort of practice almost never stirred up any divisive ideological questions because such things mattered very little to most local leaders, especially when the "spoils of office" were at stake. "Without patronage to be disposed of and with nothing but questions of public policy to be settled at election here," wrote one Democratic editor, "universal apathy would prevail."<sup>91</sup> For most local politicians the "essence of politics" was to get power.<sup>92</sup> After they became part of the power structure, moreover, they had compelling reasons to remain within the Democratic party and avoid any divisive issues which might have disrupted it. At the same time, however, the danger of intra-party strife probably increased as the state-wide organization became looser and looser until finally it existed "only on paper, and . . . by suffrance," leaving nothing in its place which could effectively use such political tools of persuasion as patronage in keeping the party together and in getting it moving in the same general

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<sup>89</sup>See Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago, 1971); Frederick C. Luebke, *Immigrants and Politics: The Germans of Nebraska, 1880-1900* (Lincoln, 1969); Samuel McSeveney, *The Politics of Depression: Political Behavior in the Northeast, 1893-1896* (New York, 1972); Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture*.

<sup>90</sup>See, for example, *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 26, 1885; *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, March 19, 1885, April 1, 1887; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, March 31, June 2, 1887.

<sup>91</sup>*Calera Shelby Sentinel*, December 24, 1885.

<sup>92</sup>*Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, August 24, 1887. See also, *Livingston Journal*, March 3, 1887.

direction.<sup>93</sup>

Although the lack of an effective central organization made disruption of the Democratic party more likely, the Bourbons could still stave off most threats to their political hegemony by using such weapons as their control of the state government, the election machinery, and the black vote. In the late 1870s, the state legislature made courts of county commissioners appointive by the governor in order to prevent the election of black or Radical Republican officials; an 1879 election law facilitated not only the disqualification of valid Republican ballots but also the entry of phony Democratic ballots into boxes; before the last pockets of Radical Republican resistance all but disappeared, the Democrats used their power in the legislature to gerrymander the state so that most of the black belt counties, the location of the biggest Republican majorities, fell into one congressional district. As a result of such tactics, Bourbon power soon became secure while the Republicans became politically impotent. Once the Bourbons held the reins of power, moreover, they turned the black belt and that area's heavy black vote into important sources of Democratic strength. During the Redemption era the Bourbons had used all forms of intimidation from threats to guns to drive the blacks from the polls. After regaining control of the state government, however, the Bourbons, who often got valuable assistance from black leaders, then employed the black vote as a means of maintaining Democratic political hegemony.<sup>94</sup> The Bourbons used less force than in earlier days, but their tactics still covered almost the entire field of election crimes and chicanery: they included stealing ballot boxes, putting polls at unannounced places, falsifying voter registrations, il-

<sup>93</sup>Robert McKee to John T. Morgan, January 8, 1882, McKee Papers. For background information on the structure of political institutions in the late nineteenth century, see Robert D. Marcus, *Grand Old Party: Political Structure in the Gilded Age, 1880-1896* (New York, 1971); William J. Cooper, Jr., *The Conservative Regime: South Carolina, 1877-1890* (Baltimore, 1968); David J. Rothman, *Politics and Power: The United States Senate, 1869-1901* (Cambridge, 1966).

<sup>94</sup>Malcolm Cook McMillan, *Constitutional Development in Alabama, 1798-1901: A Study in Politics, the Negro, and Sectionalism* (Chapel Hill, 1955), 217; Goings, *Bourbon Democracy*, 35-36; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, May 19, 1887; *Columbiana Banner of Liberty*, March 18, 1886; *Guntersville Democrat*, November 16, 1882. See also, Joseph Matt Brittain, "Negro Suffrage and Politics in Alabama Since 1870" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1958).

legally arresting voters on election days, bribing voters, and failing to set up polls in places where heavy opposition was expected. In addition, the 1875 Alabama constitution, which was passed by the Democrats soon after they regained power, in effect gave over representation to the black belt by basing that region's representation on politically weak but numerically heavy black populations. By such methods the Bourbons took control of the black belt and its black voters and molded them into a solid core of Bourbon strength.

In some ways, however, the black vote remained a source of lingering insecurity for the Democrats. Although it was one of the keys to Bourbon power, it could become a source of controversy if party splits occurred. In such a situation, the black vote might be courted by several factions of the Democratic party and perhaps even could become the basis of destructive realignments. Or it might be lost altogether to the Republicans. Several related factors, including the Democrats' lingering insecurity about the black vote, produced such strong sentiments in favor of Negro disfranchisement that Governor Thomas Seay in 1886 recommended calling a constitutional convention to settle the suffrage question.<sup>95</sup> Three years later the Alabama legislature almost passed a bill designed to disfranchise blacks by setting up elaborate new voting procedures and establishing new qualifications for voting.<sup>96</sup> Yet the movement for Negro disfranchisement faded before the specter of federal intervention, the unwillingness of black belt Bourbons to relinquish "their" black votes, and the opposition of the predominantly white counties where many people feared that disfranchisement of the blacks would be accompanied by the same thing for many "poor whites."

Other matters related to the status of blacks in Alabama society had political significance in the late nineteenth century. Most white Alabamians must have thought that the Bourbons had the best outlook on these ethnocultural issues, for the Bourbons owed much of their political success to the white voters' favorable response to their position on the Negro's role in post-Reconstruction Alabama. During the redemption era and

<sup>95</sup>Clark, *Populism in Alabama*, 19.

<sup>96</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, January 24, 1889; Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*, March 6, 1889.

in later years, Democratic campaigns emphasized the need for white unity in the face of the "Negro threat."<sup>97</sup> In these campaigns the "cry and the chief plank of Bourbon Democracy [was] the 'nigger,'" while the Democrats pictured the Republicans as the party of "renegade white men" and "thick-lipped negroes."<sup>98</sup> White solidarity behind the Bourbons, as the leaders of the white man's party, had to be maintained at all costs if white supremacy was to be preserved in Alabama. But what did the Bourbons mean by "white supremacy?" Only a few Democrats would have argued with the contention that the changes wrought by emancipation and Reconstruction made necessary a re-definition of the Negro's place in Alabama society. Yet the place set aside for blacks by virtually all Bourbons amounted to nothing new: it was a reaffirmation of most features of the antebellum Alabama system of race relations and it even reestablished many racial customs practiced under slavery, altering some customs only where legal modifications had become necessary. One reason that the Bourbons' policy advanced their political fortunes was that white Alabamians "did not believe that the loss of the war meant accepting a political and social . . . revolution in regard to the Negro."<sup>99</sup> Most whites could not conceive of any dramatic changes in their relationship with an "animal" who "resembled the human race" but whose skull and lips were thick and whose actions often were "savage," "brutal," "vicious," and "ferocious."<sup>100</sup> Many white Alabamians even supported "colonization" or the creation of a separate black state or some other scheme for getting rid of the state's black population.<sup>101</sup> While commenting on such sentiments, a Democratic newspaper reporter said:

There was a road [gang] working near me the other day, and the white men got to talking about the negro, and they were all of one mind. They wanted him to go, and said they would rather be taxed for that

<sup>97</sup>See, for example, *Mobile Register*, May 30, June 6, July, 11, 1874; *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, May 27, October 28, 1886; *Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, March 13, 1889; *Birmingham Age-Herald*, July 27, 1890.

<sup>98</sup>*Huntsville Gazette*, December 17, 1887; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, October 4, 1888.

<sup>99</sup>McMillan, *Constitutional Development in Alabama*, 362.

<sup>100</sup>See *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, July 23, 30, February 19, 25, 1885.

<sup>101</sup>*Livingston Journal*, August 9, 1889; *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, July 30, 1885, January 3, 1889; *Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, January 2, 1889.

purpose than any other. They are tired of his thieving, and they live in apprehension of something worse that he may do, for nobody knows where the next victim may be found.<sup>102</sup>

The Bourbons, however, rejected virulent racism in favor of a paternalistic policy. They expected that the best class of whites would assume political and economic control of blacks and also give concern to their advancement within the limits of Alabama's racial customs.<sup>103</sup> Black leaders, who were induced by Democratic patronage and the lack of better alternatives (extreme racism was perhaps the most likely alternative), supported the Bourbons and their paternalistic system, while many northerners acquiesced in what was happening.<sup>104</sup> As a result, many Alabamians soon joined southerners elsewhere in a call for legislation to settle the question of the Negro's place in society.<sup>105</sup> "[A]ll there is to it," wrote Ben Herr, the well-known Bourbon editor of the *Livingston Journal*, "is to let the Southern States have the rights that Northern States have to manage their own affairs. When that is done the negro will quietly and happily take up his estate according to his color and inferior position, and the intelligence of the country will do for him better than he can do for himself."<sup>106</sup> Alabama and the other southern states gradually put into effect a new codification of the status of blacks. In Alabama this development occurred during the final years of Bourbon control, after many racial customs had already hardened into practically unbreakable rules requiring almost complete segregation of the races in such places as hotels, schools, railroad cars, and even railroad stations.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, September 17, 1887.

<sup>103</sup>See *Ibid.*, September 17, 1885, August 25, 1887. For late nineteenth century views on the nature of paternalism under slavery, see *Livingston Journal*, September 27, 1889.

<sup>104</sup>C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (3rd. rev. ed., New York, 1974), 51; *The Burden of Southern History* (rev. ed., New York, 1968), 81-82. See also, *Livingston Journal*, January 27, 1887, March 15, 1888, October 11, 18, 1889; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, May 19, October 20, 1887; *Huntsville Gazette*, September 24, 1887.

<sup>105</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, October 3, 10, 1889; *Livingston Journal*, October 10, 1890.

<sup>106</sup>*Livingston Journal*, October 18, 1889.

<sup>107</sup>*Six Mile Bibb Blade*, March 10, 1887, July 19, December 6, 20, 1888; *Huntsville Weekly Mercury*, May 2, 1888; *Huntsville Gazette*, January 21, February 18, 1888; *Calera Shelby Sentinel*, September 1, 1886.



Although white supremacy seemed more and more secure and racism gradually declined as an overt issue, the Bourbons still tried to avoid any meaningful discussion of such other issues as the declining status of agriculture.<sup>108</sup> The *Birmingham Herald* blamed this situation on the fact that "politics in this state are monopolized by cross road lawyers" who thought of almost nothing except the spoils of office.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, one Democratic editor warned: "There are too many discordant elements in Alabama politics to unnecessarily inject into it a very dangerous factor [such as a potentially divisive issue] and create a nucleus around which a formidable party might be quickly formed."<sup>110</sup> A few pleas for some economic legislation did appear, and the state's convict lease system drew some criticism, but no significant progressive spirit existed in Alabama to encourage far-reaching economic and social legislation.<sup>111</sup> The lack of such a spirit originated in large part from the widespread acceptance of laissez faire philosophy during the Gilded Age.<sup>112</sup> An added factor in the South, moreover, was the lack of native southern criticism. Faced with a strong defensive reaction to criticism of the region, native southern critics appeared only infrequently and followed a cautious policy, offering little more than an occasional plea for a more humanitarian outlook to appear in mankind or making a rare call for increased government activity to solve the problems of the age.<sup>113</sup>

At the same time, Bourbon governments in Alabama and

<sup>108</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, May 13, 1886; Huntsville *Gazette*, December 17, 1887.

<sup>109</sup>Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, January 12, 1888, quoting *Birmingham Herald*.

<sup>110</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, 1886.

<sup>111</sup>See *Livingston Journal*, February 14, August 30, 1889; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 18, August 11, 1886; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 10, 1887.

<sup>112</sup>See C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (rev. ed., Garden City, 1956), 265-267; Wallace Farnham, "The Weakened Spring of Government: A Study of Nineteenth-Century American History," *American Historical Review*, LXVIII (April, 1963), 662-680.

<sup>113</sup>For examples of this defensive reaction, see Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 16, 1888; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, November 21, 1888, citing *Montgomery Dispatch*. See also, Daniel Lee Cloyd, "Prelude to Reform: Political, Economic, and Social Thought of Alabama Baptists, 1877-1890," *Alabama Review*, XXXI (January, 1978), 48-64. On southern dissenters in the late nineteenth century, see Carl N. Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1974), 191-371.

throughout the South gained a reputation for honesty and purity that they did not deserve. Their association with the redemption of white rule, the preservation of white supremacy, and the "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" produced a shroud of myth around their operations.<sup>114</sup> To their benefit the Bourbons were contrasted with the Radical Republicans in a manner which called into play all the real and imagined horrors of Reconstruction: whereas the Radicals were pictured as advocates of racial amalgamation, the Bourbons were cast in the role of defenders of the white race; whereas the Radicals were labeled corrupt, the Bourbons were made out to be the foes of corruption, even though corruption may have increased under the Democrats. Because the Bourbons' special mythology buttressed their power, opposition to their policies or serious proposals for economic and social reform did not arise easily from within the Democratic party. For most people who disagreed with the Bourbons' policies, the only chance for a proper hearing was with some source outside the party. Before the 1890s, however, this apparently did not matter very much to most Alabama voters, because until then few members of the electorate supported any alternatives to the group in power. Either being attracted by the Bourbons' special appeal or stymied by the realities of Bourbon power, most Alabamians continued to vote Democratic — or not at all.

Yet some weak political opposition to the Bourbons did arise in the late seventies and early eighties. The Greenback-Labor party, known in Alabama as the Anti-Bourbon party, appeared in the state by about 1880. On the national level this group had some connections with the granger movement and focused on economic issues. At their 1880 state convention in Montgomery, the Anti-Bourbons adopted a platform that copied the platform of the national greenbackers, who had attracted an agrarian following by calling for the reversal of many national economic policies, such as the resumption of specie payments, which many farmers considered to be detrimental to their interests. In addition to several financial planks borrowed from the national greenbackers, the Anti-Bourbon platform contained proposals for election reforms and tax reforms, condemned the convict lease system, and criticized the Bour-

<sup>114</sup>See Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition*, 20-23; Gaston, *The New South Creed*, especially 217-246.

bons' overweening interest in business. On the other hand, the Anti-Bourbons took no strong stand in regard to the railroads at a time when the question of the railroad commission was being discussed throughout the state. For practical reasons, the Anti-Bourbons quickly joined with the state's Republican party and boldly nominated gubernatorial candidates in 1880, 1882, and 1884.<sup>115</sup> Even though the Anti-Bourbons enjoyed virtually no political success and got noticeable support only in North Alabama, they nevertheless raised some significant issues and actually attempted to split the solidarity of the Democracy. Because the Democratic party had been artificially welded together along uneven seams, when opposing groups such as the Anti-Bourbons exerted themselves then party cohesion could become difficult to maintain. By the mid-1880s, the Bourbons — who could not easily have avoided being affected in some way by the greenbackers and the growing class-consciousness among farmers — were experiencing internal party strife over leadership, management, and policy. Party factionalism soon reached dangerous proportions, culminating in the open battle at the 1886 convention. Few contemporary political observers then would have doubted that the rise of a large, organized protest group with appealing ideas would pose a serious threat to the Bourbon's control of a united Democratic party.

The Grange had almost disappeared from Alabama by the 1880s, but many farmers still followed the grangers' example by joining and supporting agrarian organizations. During the early eighties, numerous local farm clubs sprouted up sporadically and then often vanished. While they existed these groups expressed their concern over the state's agricultural distress and discussed many possible solutions to the plight of the farmers.<sup>116</sup> "Every farmer in Alabama should be a member of a farmers' club or a grange," said the *Montgomery Southern Agriculturist*, "they are educators to the agriculturists and will do great good in stimulating the people to excell."<sup>117</sup> Some farm

<sup>115</sup>Clark, *Populism in Alabama*, 24-26, 28.

<sup>116</sup>Guntersville *Democrat*, May 12, 1887; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, July 23, 30, September 10, 1885, December 9, 1886; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, February 24 (misprinted as February 23), March 3, 10, 31, 1887.

<sup>117</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, November 25, 1886, quoting *Montgomery Southern Agriculturist*.

clubs even declared that the depressed agrarian class should be brought together in an organization that would get involved in politics on their behalf.<sup>118</sup> In reaction to this sentiment, some local candidates for office began appearing before the clubs. However, because the farm clubs had neither a central organization with state-wide leadership nor a clear program, they had only local political significance.

In response to the need for an effective statewide organization of farmers and to the act which established the Alabama Department of Agriculture, Edward Chambers Betts, the first Commissioner of Agriculture, sought to revive the State Agricultural Society. His call to many of Alabama's leading agriculturists resulted in a convention for that purpose. One hundred, twenty-one delegates from dozens of local farm clubs and some of the few remaining granges met in Montgomery in 1884 and successfully resurrected the society.<sup>119</sup> Most of the State Agricultural Society's leaders came from the upper class and most probably came from the front ranks of the Bourbon Democrats. As a group they did not represent the average Alabama farmer, and most of them certainly did not want to see the masses of small farmers organized for what might become disruptive political action.<sup>120</sup> In a speech delivered at the Agricultural Society's third annual convention in 1886, Mayor William Henry Skaggs of Talladega warned of the growing likelihood of dangerous splits in the Democratic party if agrarian organizations became further involved in politics. He also reminded the delegates of the grave dangers to white rule that any such splits would pose. Opposing factions probably would begin openly courting black votes and might even make them once again a major factor, perhaps even the key to power, in Alabama politics. In such circumstances, Skaggs implied, any number of unimaginable horrors would be possible.<sup>121</sup>

Skaggs did not need to worry, however, for the Agricul-

<sup>118</sup>See, for example, *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, February 10, 1887.

<sup>119</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser*, August 2, 29, 1884. See also, *Proceedings of the First Annual Session of the Alabama State Agricultural Society*, 1884. For a copy of the Agricultural Society's constitution, see Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, October 28, 1886.

<sup>120</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 110.

<sup>121</sup>*Proceedings of the Third Annual Session of the Alabama State Agricultural Society*, 1886, 6-8.



tural Society maintained a strict non-partisan policy and sought only to improve the educational level of Alabama's farmers.<sup>122</sup> As a result, the organization evolved gradually into an information dispensing arm of the Department of Agriculture, distributing pamphlets on scientific agriculture and disseminating news of the department's activities throughout the farmers' ranks. At the society's annual conventions, the delegates discussed the sad condition of agriculture and concluded that it stemmed from such problems as the inadequacies of the younger generation of both black and white laborers, the adverse effects of the lien system, the deficiencies of the school system, and the corruption of political parties. Because of its non-partisan policy, however, the Agricultural Society made no real effort to get the Bourbons to solve either these problems or the others worrying the state's agriculturists. Moreover, the society's programs and ideas apparently had little appeal to the average farmer, while its local affiliates lacked permanence and often shifted their allegiance back and forth between the local farm clubs, the granges, and the national farmers' organizations which began appearing in Alabama in the mid-1880s.

One of these national farmers' organizations was the Agricultural Wheel. Begun in Arkansas in the early 1880s with the main purpose of destroying the lien system by forming cooperatives, the Wheel spread to Alabama in 1886. Once in the state, the Wheel established an official newspaper, the *Bell-green Alabama State Wheel*, and leveled a barrage of criticism at the lien system, even calling it a plot of Satan. In addition, the organization called for crop diversification and demanded beneficial legislation on such matters as taxes, interest rates, and the currency issue. Because many of its national leaders tended to favor far-reaching government action to solve the farmers' problems, the Wheel gained a reputation for being socialistic and even dangerous. The Wheel had some strength in the Tennessee River Valley of North Alabama, but internal strife between those members who called for political action and those who advocated a non-partisan policy kept the organization from presenting a united front and prevented it from

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<sup>122</sup>*Proceedings of the Second Semi-Annual Session of the Alabama State Agricultural Society, 1887, 11; Proceedings of the First Semi-Annual Session of the Alabama State Agricultural Society, 1885, 175.*



taking firm root across the state.<sup>123</sup>

Alabama farmers gave the Southern Farmers' Alliance (the National Farmers' Alliance and Co-operative Union) a much better reception when it entered the state. The Southern Alliance appeared in Texas in the late seventies and early eighties. After some growth in members (mostly in Texas), the group's leaders early in 1887 adopted an aggressive expansion program as part of an effort to avoid a split over the political action issue that had crippled the Wheel.<sup>124</sup> Organizers appeared in Alabama in the spring of 1887 and rapidly formed local alliances throughout the state, frequently "swallowing up" the numerous farm clubs, granges, and agricultural societies which had been in existence for several years.<sup>125</sup> One local correspondent of the *Six Mile Bibb Blade* noted at the time that the "farmers alliance is increasing daily in strength in these ends of the earth," while the *Blade's* editor commented on how the "membership of this society seems to be very much attached to it."<sup>126</sup> After an unsuccessful first effort, a state convention held in Madison County in August 1887 established the Alabama State Alliance. As its first president, the new group chose Samuel M. Adams, a Bibb County minister who had been a leader in organizing many local alliances.<sup>127</sup> The organization of new lodges took place so rapidly that by late 1889 the Alabama State Alliance claimed over 3,000 local alliances with 125,000 members.<sup>128</sup> "The farmers are rising in one solid phalanx," declared alliancewoman Anna Shaw, "and are battling for their rights and justice."<sup>129</sup>

The Alliance drew its members from a variety of rural

<sup>123</sup>Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, 62, 83-85, 72-74, 57-58; Athens *Alliance Banner*, February 10, 1888; Clanton *Chilton View*, August 8, 1889; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, August 4, 1887, citing Moulton *Advertiser*; Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 122-129.

<sup>124</sup>Robert C. McMath, Jr., *Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance* (Chapel Hill, 1975), 3-28.

<sup>125</sup>*Six Mile Bibb Blade*, April 7, 14, 21, May 5, 19, 1887; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, July 21, 1887; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, July 18, 25, August 1, 1888, January 30, 1889; Albertville *Marshall County News*, November 15, 1894.

<sup>126</sup>*Six Mile Bibb Blade*, May 5, 12, 1887.

<sup>127</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 131, 133-134; *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, May 19, October, 27, 1887.

<sup>128</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 138.

<sup>129</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, December 19, 1888.

groups. Most members were small farmers — “mostly poor white folks searching for that ‘Eldorado’ that we may never find but that we long for and hope for” — but those who joined include big planters, country preachers, country doctors, country school teachers, farm laborers, and mechanics.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, a prominent Madison County citizen refused to join the new group because he thought “all of those who belong to it are the rag-tag and bobtail of creation.”<sup>131</sup> Such sentiments were widely held and probably owed much to the “special attention” given by Alliance organizers to “the poorer class” of “farmer, land-owner, and tenant” whom they sought out and met “in their fields” and “not in towns and court houses.”<sup>132</sup> The Alliance’s strength was greatest in the predominantly white counties “in the hilly and sandy sections of the State” and weakest “in the counties of the Black Belt,” the region of the best soils and the most extensive agricultural operations.<sup>133</sup> Many white tenants and sharecroppers joined the new organization even though their actions met with such strong opposition that they often refused to admit their membership due to fear of reprisals.<sup>134</sup> At the same time, however, many blacks failed to join because white landowners took a dim view of Alliance membership by their black tenants, especially in the black belt where blacks formed a majority of the population and farmed most of the lands.<sup>135</sup> Another factor which probably limited black membership was the refusal of the Alliance to give blacks equal status with whites.

Despite severe hardships, black farm groups did appear in Alabama. By 1888 the state press commented frequently on those black farm organizations which had entered Alabama.<sup>136</sup> The Wheel permitted separate black locals and a few of these probably appeared, but the largest Negro group was the Colored Farmers’ National Alliance (established in Texas as a national

<sup>130</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, February 16, 1888; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, April 14, 1887.

<sup>131</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, January 30, 1889.

<sup>132</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 15, 1888.

<sup>133</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, January 30, 1889.

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*, August 15, 1888.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, January 30, 1889.

<sup>136</sup>See Athens *Alliance Banner*, May 24, 1888; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, August 29, October 24, 1888, January 30, 1889; Clanton *Chilton View*, October 25, 1888; Livingston *Journal*, September 20, 27, 1889; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, December 5, 1889.

organization in 1888).<sup>137</sup> The Colored Alliance apparently began gaining members in Alabama after a joint national convention of the Wheel and Alliance in December 1888 approved the creation of Colored Alliance locals.<sup>138</sup> Within the next year, a large contingent of black alliancemen came into existence in Alabama.<sup>139</sup> Many white Alabamians linked the Colored Alliance with the Republican party and with rumors circulating throughout the state of black "before dawn" terrorist groups which were supposed to be plotting to "clean the white rebs up women and children."<sup>140</sup> Such feelings combined with white racial attitudes to make the Alabama State Alliance extremely cautious when discussing the issue of organizing blacks.<sup>141</sup> "I spect you uns is heard we're gwine ter Liance the nigger," wrote "Liance Man" in the *Six Mile Bibb Blade*, "but we're just agwine to splanify a few things to um sorter like er side show."<sup>142</sup> While the matter was before the Alliance, a typical local reaction came from the Valley Creek Alliance which dealt with the question simply by resolving "that we believe in the superiority of the white race over the negro race."<sup>143</sup> Hector D. Lane, then editor of the *Athens Alabama Farmer* and an important Alliance leader, declared that he "would not approve of any semblance of social equality" but also said he did not mind if the blacks formed their own completely separate "colored alliances" because "the negro farmer is straining in the same rut that the poor white man of the south is in." In addition, Lane explained, other factors has to be considered: "The negro lies like a club between the Alliance and the Anti-Alliance[;] we can take him up and use him against them, if not, he is the most dangerous weapon that can be used against us."<sup>144</sup> Even though many white alliancemen still had strong misgivings about any kind of black organization, the Alabama State Alliance endorsed "the organization of the colored peo-

<sup>137</sup>See Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 127; McMath, *Populist Vanguard*, 44-45.

<sup>138</sup>For reports on the meeting held at Meridian, Mississippi, see *Athens Alabama Farmer*, January 2, 9, 1889.

<sup>139</sup>Clanton *Chilton View*, October 25, 1888; *Athens Alabama Farmer*, January 30, 1889.

<sup>140</sup>*Livingston Journal*, September 27, 20, 1888.

<sup>141</sup>See *Athens Alliance Banner*, May 24, 1888.

<sup>142</sup>*Six Mile Bibb Blade*, June 7, 1888.

<sup>143</sup>*Athens Alliance Banner*, May 3, 1888.

<sup>144</sup>*Athens Alabama Farmer*, October 24, 1888.

ple."<sup>145</sup> It supported only segregated black groups, however, and apparently it did so only to gain black support for the aims of the white man's Alliance.

During its first three years, the Alabama State Alliance attracted a large rural following by presenting the farmers with what amounted to a compelling agrarian ideology, while also carrying on educational activities and engaging in co-operative ventures. Like the grangers before them, the Alliance leaders believed that the farmers had to be shown the causes of their plight and taught many things related to their welfare: the bad results of overproduction and wasteful farming methods, the crushing impact of the credit system, the "extortions" of speculators and middlemen, the indifference and corruption of politicians, the ill effects of monopolies and the protective tariff, the inequities of the taxation system, the advantages of crop diversification and scientific agriculture, and above all the benefits of cooperation. These subjects and others like them served as the material for numerous newspaper articles and for countless speeches delivered throughout Alabama before thousands of farmers by hundreds of national, state, and local Alliance lecturers.<sup>146</sup> In 1891 Leonidas Lafayette Polk of North Carolina, national president of the Southern Alliance, declared the group's primary goal to be united action to restore the equilibrium which he said once had existed in American government and which had to be re-created if the farmers were to gain relief.<sup>147</sup> Before the Alliance tried to have such a direct impact on the political system, however, it sought to achieve its agrarian goals through "co-operation," which Harry G. McCall, a leader in the Alliance movement and at one time the editor of the *Montgomery Alliance Advocate*, defined as the farmers' application to their situation of "The Brotherhood of Man" as expressed by Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>148</sup> For many

<sup>145</sup>*Ibid.*, August 29, 1888.

<sup>146</sup>See Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, July 14, 1887, April 19, 1888, January 3, December 5, 1889; Clanton *Chilton View*, November 28, 1889; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, September 5, November 7, 1888; Athens *Alliance Banner*, January 13, February 10, 16, May 31, 1888; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, April 14, 1887, February 9, April 12, November 1, 1888.

<sup>147</sup>Leonidas L. Polk, "The Farmer's Discontent," *North American Review*, CLIII (July, 1891), 5-6.

<sup>148</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, January 3, 1889. For a critical view of the pessimistic outlook on the potential of the cooperative spirit, see Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 1, 1888.

Alliance members, cooperation was God's way of using the Alliance to uplift agriculture, which the alliancemen considered to be ordained by God as "the most important human activity," and to them cooperation became an almost perfect evangelical force. Alliancemen felt that cooperation would enable them to purge the existing social, political, and economic systems of all evils, thereby opening the door to an utopian era based on humanitarianism and other Christian principles.<sup>149</sup> The Alliance's "objects and purposes," said the Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, "if carried out will revolutionize the world."<sup>150</sup> Somewhere along the road to social and political perfection, agricultural self-sufficiency would spread; oppressive debt would disappear, while the economy would be restored to a cash basis and farmers would enter a golden age of prosperity. "[E]re long," declared John R. Christian, an Alexander City Alliance leader, "the good old ante-bellum days will return, I hope never to depart again."<sup>151</sup> If one of the Alliance's major goals was to restore the "anti-bellum days" when the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal of self-sufficient small farms was thought to be reality, then to succeed the Alliance had to engage good country folks who were untarnished by materialism and other "sinful secular associations" in a farmers' cooperative crusade against those unholy forces which to the agrarians often were associated with the rise of an urban, centralized bureaucratic nation and an interdependent national economy.<sup>152</sup>

Soon Alliance business cooperatives, pictured as a means of destroying the credit system and ending the "leechings" and "extortions" of middlemen, spread across Alabama. While they appeared in most parts of the state, the regions of the most tenancy and the greatest cotton production had few such ventures because many big landholders in those areas denied their tenants the right to participate in them. As a result, most Alliance cooperatives were located in the regions of more di-

<sup>149</sup>Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, March 15, April 19, 1888; J. H. Clegg to the editor, Athens *Alliance Banner*, May 24, 1888; Guntersville *Democrat*, July 28, April 14, September 15, 1887; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, July 18, August 1, October 17, December 19, 1888. See also, Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, 155.

<sup>150</sup>Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, April 14, 1887.

<sup>151</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 1, 1888.

<sup>152</sup>See Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, October 6, 1887, February 23, 1888; Athens *Alliance Banner*, January 20, February 23, 16, May 10, 24, 1888; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, August 22, June 20, 1888; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, November 28, 1889.



versified corps and comparatively less tenancy.<sup>153</sup> The kinds of Alliance business enterprises pretty well covered the range of possibilities. An Alliance bank existed briefly in Selma, while alliancemen also organized cotton mills, gin houses, warehouses, country cooperatives, and innumerable country stores.<sup>154</sup> By early 1888 a typical county alliance boasted of "one store starting up on the Rochdale plan, two adopted merchants and a trade committee authorized to negotiate and make contracts with others."<sup>155</sup> On the state level, the biggest business venture was the Alliance State Exchange, which reportedly was "ready for business" in late 1888 but did not actually open until 1889.<sup>156</sup> While the movement to establish the Exchange spurred many Alabama alliancemen to bold action like "the old horse that was whipped," once it existed the Exchange functioned as a purchasing agent through which the farmers' orders were filled and from which the farmers could receive the cash advances needed by many of them before they could make purchases.<sup>157</sup> The Exchange did \$100,000 worth of business in 1889 and \$140,000 in 1890, but over-extension of its activities, a lack of experienced management, competition from firmly entrenched interests, and perhaps most of all "the enormity of the agricultural problems" facing "farmers who were caught up in the process of commercialization" contributed to its rapid decline. By 1891 the Exchange was ineffective.<sup>158</sup>

The Exchange and almost every other Alliance business enterprise faced determined opposition from established merchants and other enemies of the order. This opposition took many forms — from all types of legal and illegal harassment to the extreme cases where a few Alliance cooperatives were

<sup>153</sup>William Warren Rogers, "The Farmers' Alliance in Alabama," *Alabama Review*, XV (January, 1962), 11-14.

<sup>154</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, August 15, October 24, December 5, 1888; Clanton *Chilton View*, October 24, 1889; Gadsden *Leader*, August 23, 1890; Calera *Shelby Sentinel*, September 22, 1887, February 23, 1888; Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 1, 1888; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, October 20, 27, December 1, 1887, October 11, 1888; Guntersville *Democrat*, January 24, 1889, October 6, 1890.

<sup>155</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, February 3, 1888.

<sup>156</sup>Athens *Alabama Farmer*, September 5, 1888; Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 154-155.

<sup>157</sup>The quotation is from Athens *Alabama Farmer*, June 12, 1888. See also, Livingston *Journal*, July 26, 1889.

<sup>158</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 156-158; McMath, *Populist Vanguard*, 58.

burned by arsonists and an Alliance storekeeper and his clerk were murdered in Dothan.<sup>159</sup> Yet not even such violence prevented the economic activities of the Alliance from producing some successes. The *Livingston Journal* gave the group all the credit for bringing about the sizeable drop in agricultural interest rates which occurred soon after the Alliance first appeared on the scene.<sup>160</sup> Competition from local Alliance stores reportedly caused the failure of some small businesses like J. J. Bailey & Co. of Tallapoosa County.<sup>161</sup> The Alliance won a major victory when its boycott forced the "jute-bagging trust" to reduce its prices.<sup>162</sup> Under a typical and widespread type of arrangement, Pearson's Chapel Alliance near Alexander City contracted with three local merchants to give them the local Alliance trade in return for "prices never before known to the farmers of our country."<sup>163</sup> Many local Alliances made such arrangements, but in the long run they probably aided the merchants and worked against the goals of the Alliance. Moreover, most of the Alliance's more grandiose schemes such as holding the cotton crop for higher prices or securing a moratorium on debts never even had a chance of succeeding.

By 1890 the Alliance's cooperative activities had helped build up a large rural membership which in turn had gained internal cohesion and a sense of purpose in large part from the cooperative movement. Moreover, the order's cooperative activities may even have contributed to a revolution in rising expectations among Alabama's farmers by offering them a way out of poverty. On the other hand, however, the Alliance's economic programs had begun deteriorating rapidly on all fronts and more and more alliancemen were becoming convinced that cooperation would never bring economic relief.<sup>164</sup> While the collapsing cooperative movement offered less and less hope for the salvation of Alabama's farmers, their distress threatened to grow worse and their enemies still flourished. At the

<sup>159</sup>Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 158; Clanton *Chilton View*, October 17, 1889.

See also, Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 22, April 5, 1888; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, August 22, 1888; Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, March 22, 1888.

<sup>160</sup>*Livingston Journal*, January 31, 1889.

<sup>161</sup>See, for example, Athens *Alliance Banner*, April 12, 1888.

<sup>162</sup>Six Mile *Bibb Blade*, August 16, 1888; Athens *Alabama Farmer*, August 29, October 3, 1888; *The One-Gallused Rebellion*, 163-164.

<sup>163</sup>Athens *Alliance Banner*, March 22, 1888.

<sup>164</sup>See McMath, *Populist Vanguard*, 53-54.

same time, the Alliance movement had instilled in the state's farmers the idea that they had enlisted on the right side in a conflict of cultures between Jeffersonian agrarianism and a new materialistic industrial urbanism. The Alliance had not yet made a determined effort to obtain statewide political power, but soon the order became increasingly involved in political action to achieve its agrarian goals.

Robert Penn Warren. *Jefferson Davis Gets His Citizenship Back*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1980. pp. 114. \$8.75)

About thirty years ago University of Alabama's Hudson Strode, armed with letters that Mrs. Jefferson Davis had given his mother-in-law, visited Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman in Richmond and told him he was writing a biography of Confederate President Davis. The Pulitzer prize-winning historian asked tersely: "Why?" Had I been there, I would have piped up, "Because it's needed".

However, perhaps the first historian, Herodotus of Halicarnassum might have the last word on writing about Jefferson Davis. . . . "that the great deeds of men may not be forgotten. . . . whether Greek or foreigners; and especially the causes of their wars."

Robert Penn Warren was born in Guthrie, Kentucky in 1905 of a Virginia heritage. He was one of the four Southerners who comprised the Nashville Fugitives in the 20's, one of the most influential groups in American letters. In 1930, he became one of the twelve Southerners who published their Agerian manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*. A Pulitzer Prize winner in both fiction (1947) and poetry (1958) he has been an English professor at Yale since 1961 and resides in Fairfield, Connecticut. The most distinguished voice in this small volume speaks with a deep understanding of a Southern heritage, a broad geographically garnered education and a Northern residence.

In a sweeping 114-page history, Mr. Warren sensitively distills an entire biography of Jefferson Finis Davis, fights the Civil War all over again, deftly contrasts Lincoln and Davis, explains the issue of Mr. Davis' citizenship and justifies the North and the South.

Drawing upon childhood chats with his grandfather who fought in The War, Professor Warren sets the mood with an 11-page preamble before he even mentions Jefferson Davis' name. These "fumbling recollections" of his childhood in Guthrie, only a few miles from Fairfield where Jefferson Davis was born, prepare the uninitiated for what is to come and

establishes the author's credentials. Warren then plunges into a succinct history of Jefferson Davis' life, loves, strengths and flaws. This is written in pure poetry, woven into the warp and woof of perception and history and makes the work readable and personal.

Jefferson Davis died on December 6, 1889.

On January 25, 1976 Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon introduced Senate Joint Resolution 16 to return citizenship to Jefferson Davis "to keep green and to restore to him the rights due an outstanding American." The resolution passed unanimously by voice vote and on October 17, 1978 President Carter signed it into law.

So, now Jefferson Davis has his citizenship back (which he never believed he lost in the first place), but he has not yet been pardoned (which would not bother him, since he believed that he never did anything to warrant a pardon).

Why is the event important? Warren declares that it is because Jefferson Davis has emerged holding "an eternal franchise in that shadowy rarely-remembered nation of men and women who in their brief lives learned the true definition of honor."

The young need heroes. They need lessons in honor in today's "business ethic," where depersonalized men are judged by their money rather than their character and honor. Perhaps an imperfect hero in this imperfect world is easier to identify with than say, R. E. Lee.

The time is right for a definitive biography of Jefferson Davis to be written. The rancor of prior generations has died as the South has risen. With Hudson Strode's adulatory three-volume biography out of print and others tantalizing but found wanting, there is a need to publicize and popularize the life of Jefferson Davis. With the cooperation of Davis family descendants, Jefferson Davis's papers have been collected and are being published by Rice University. Other "very human" letters have just been uncovered in a Memphis bank which promise to reveal other facets in the character and personality of the man known in his own time as the Sphinx of the Confederacy. With the broad dissemination of this essay when it was first



published in the *New Yorker* magazine and now with the printing of this typographically attractive, splendidly written, handy volume, perhaps a scholarly historian with a romantic soul and a flair for the dramatic will be moved to do so.

Cameron Freedman Napier  
Regent  
The White House Association  
(Founded in 1900 to save the  
First White House of the Confederacy  
in Montgomery, Alabama.)

Richard J. Sommers, *Richmond Redeemed: The Siege At Petersburg*. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981. Pp. 670, 82 photos, 22 maps, index. \$22.50.)

If you are looking for a book which will explain in detail the myriad events of the ten-month siege of Petersburg, Virginia by Union forces in 1864-65, this book will not be of much help. However, if you want a complete library on the Civil War this work is a must addition. The author makes an in-depth study of four eventful days in September-October, 1864 which decided whether the Confederacy's capitol would finally be captured by overwhelming numbers of Federal forces — or be redeemed once again by its resourceful and courageous defenders manning the trenches around Petersburg.

The pivotal movements and battle actions by units of Major General Benjamin Butler's Army of the James, which resulted in their capture of Fort Harrison below Richmond — one of the most vital Confederate defensive positions on the peninsula — and which very easily could have meant the capture of the capitol city itself, are superbly recounted by the author. Every regiment that took part or might have taken part on each side has its battle honors clearly recorded. So thorough is Sommers' account that National Park Service interpreters at Richmond Battlefield find this portion of the book invaluable in their work. Especially revealing are the insights gained by the reader of the importance of the critical interchange of communications between Grant, the overall Federal commander headquarters at City Point, and Butler in the field. Butler's plan, so brilliantly conceived, could not help but succeed or so

it would seem. Stout Confederate resistance coupled with daring and exhausting movements of their scant troops from point to point finds one wondering how they ever managed to hold what ground they did against such superior numbers. Sommers' treatment of this phase of Grant's "Fifth Offensive" makes the situation all too easy to understand.

Simultaneous with Butler's threatening movements on the peninsula, Union Major General George Meade commanding the Army of the Potomac which surrounded Petersburg on three sides, hoped to take advantage of Lee's problems of manpower and supply. His role in the grand offensive was to roll up the weakened left of the Southern lines and thereby seize the last remaining railroads supplying Petersburg. This capture of the Army of Northern Virginia's principal supply depot would almost certainly cause Lee to evacuate Richmond, the most sought after prize of every Union field commander. Meade's operation was also well conceived and planned but the inaction of his subordinate generals and their general failure to consolidate hard won gains left him with little reward for his efforts. This "other half" of the campaign is thoroughly treated by the author.

A minor source of irritation was the author's non-uniform reference to Confederate forces as "Butternuts," "Secessionists," or "Graycoats" in both text and maps. Also, too much detail concerning individual troop movements is included during Meade's offensive. Since this action of the war and the terrain on which it took place are not that well known to the general readership of the Civil War, a few more lucid maps would have been of considerable help. These two shortcomings are made up for by the inclusion of numerous human interest accounts and excellent analyses of leadership on both sides.

The author has done his research well, thoroughly document every movement of the opposing forces with original source material, much of it previously unpublished. Originally written as a doctoral dissertation over a decade ago, Sommers' account of Grant's fifth attempt to capture the "Cockade City" should forever remain the principal book on this chapter of the American Civil War.

Paul A. Ghioto  
Horseshoe Bend, Alabama





# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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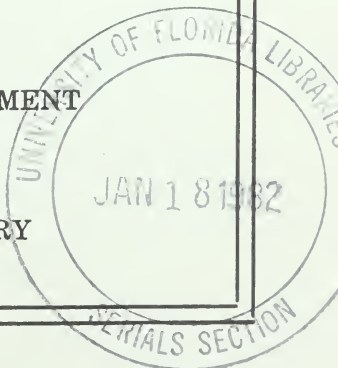
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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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## ANDREW DEXTER: FOUNDER OF MONTGOMERY

Edited By

William Warren Rogers

The land that became the site of Montgomery was purchased at the Federal land sales held at Milledgeville, Georgia, in August 1817. Among the buyers were Georgians General John B. Scott and Dr. Charles Williamson. They were members of the "Alabama Company." Also purchasing land adjacent to the Alabama River was an enigmatic Rhode Islander named Andrew Dexter. Losing no time, the Georgians quickly advertised lots for sale in the "Town of Alabama." Dexter arrived shortly to inspect his purchase, and with the financial aid of two other easterners, John Falconer and James G. Clinck, laid off lots a mile east of the "Town of Alabama." Dexter's village was named "New Philadelphia." The two settlements became rivals, although Dexter's town was located on higher ground and attracted more immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

Peter A. Remsen, a native of New York, came South in the winter of 1817-1818 to make his fortune. He finally settled at Mobile, where he became a prominent cotton factor until his death in 1852. But his first visit was as a young man in a new country. On January 12, 1818, he recorded, "I visited New Philadelphia 1 mile back from the river. A high pleasant place and bids fair to flourish. . . . Lots sell in this place for \$50 to 150 per lot. It has 800 laid out and Mr. Dexter is about to have grist and saw mills in operation shortly 5 miles distant."<sup>2</sup> The rivalry between the villages continued for another year, but a movement for unification was successful, and both towns were incorporated under the name "Montgomery" on December 3, 1819.<sup>3</sup> Despite conflicting arguments, there is

<sup>1</sup>Wayne Flynt, *Montgomery An Illustrated History* (Woodland Hills, California, 1980), 3-5; Clanton W. Williams, "Early Ante-Bellum Montgomery: A Black-Belt Constituency," *Journal of Southern History*, VII (November, 1941), 495-525; "Extracts From The Records Of The City Of Montgomery, Alabama, 1820-1821," *Alabama Review*, I (April, 1948), 79-90; and "Conservatism in Old Montgomery, 1817-1861," *Alabama Review*, X (April, 1957), 96-110.

<sup>2</sup>William B. Hesseltine and Larry Gara (Editors), "Across Georgia And Into Alabama, 1817-1818," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (December, 1963), 336.

<sup>3</sup>See James P. Jones and William Warren Rogers (Editors), "Montgomery As The Confederate Capital: View Of A New Nation," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (Spring, 1964), 2.

general agreement that the town was named for Brigadier General Richard Montgomery of Revolutionary War fame, while the county was named for Major Lemeul Purnell Montgomery, who was killed at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814.<sup>4</sup>

Little was known of Andrew Dexter, although his contemporaries viewed him as an admirable but impractical dreamer. Poor management resulted in scant real estate profits for Dexter. He remained in Montgomery with his family, went briefly to Texas in 1833, and returned to try once more to make his fortune. A brilliant graduate of Dartmouth College, Dexter was far too much the romantic to prosper on the Alabama frontier. He decided to try Texas again and left in 1837. He got no further than Mobile before coming involved in legal difficulties that resulted in his arrest. He died in the port city that year and was buried there.

There is no scholarly work on the founder of Montgomery, but on March 19, 1871, the *Montgomery Advertiser* printed a brief biography. The author of the sketch on Dexter did not sign his name, but it is highly probable that the profile was the work of Wallace W. Screws. A gifted journalist, Screws was a native of Barbour County, read law in Montgomery, and served in the Civil War. He saw much action, was wounded, captured, and gained a reputation as a war correspondent for the *Montgomery Advertiser*. After the war ended Screws began working for the *Advertiser* and became editor on November 5, 1865. From then until his death on August 7, 1913, he guided the editorial policies of the state's leading Democratic paper.<sup>5</sup>

Screws had, from time to time, a number of partners, and there were always reporters, but he did most of the writing. His piece on Dexter is particularly valuable. Obviously, a good bit of research went into it, and Screws grasped the significance of Dexter to the city. Dexter viewed himself as a failure, but

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<sup>4</sup>Conflicting arguments about the name are in *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 13, 16, 1875.

<sup>5</sup>Rhoda Coleman Ellison, *History and Bibliography of Alabama Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century* (University, Alabama, 1954), 128. Numerous statements attesting the leadership and abilities of Screws include *Moulton Advertiser*, July 2, 1885; *Tuskegee Weekly News*, January 3, 1878; *Tuscumbia North Alabamian*, March 8, 1878; and *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, December 22, 1881.

he achieved more than he gave himself credit for. He was a banker (not a good one), a hotel owner (it burned), and all his business ventures ended in disaster. Yet he was intelligent and talented. At the end of his article, Editor Screws (who deserves a biography himself) asked the city fathers of Montgomery to erect a monument to the memory of Andrew Dexter. The suggestion has never been acted on. Montgomery's main street bears his name, but as the following article demonstrates, some further form of honor and recognition by Montgomery would be in order.

Andrew Dexter Esq., has always been considered the founder of the City of Montgomery. An extended sketch of him which is due to his memory, would doubtless prove very interesting to our present population. We regret, however, that such scanty materials exist for the purpose. With his mental culture and literary acquirements, he could have left ample materials in an excellent form but the cares and vicissitudes of his busy and unsuccessful life were too exacting on his time. Hence our notice of him must needs be rather brief and imperfect. Of our present residents, we can call to mind, Mr. Niel Blue alone, who for many years, was an intimate friend of Mr. Dexter.<sup>6</sup> He knew him well from 1819 to the period of his death in 1837, about eighteen years.

Mr. Dexter was a native of Rhode Island and descended from a family celebrated from the earliest times in that and other New England states. Some of that number were remarkable for intellect and culture, leading in the professions; others for success in the financial and commercial world; and a few were better known for their excentricities [*sic*]. In his Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, Mr. Lossing relates to White Plains, in the Autumn of 1777. While the Americans halted upon Chatterten Hill, the British, in close pursuit, rested for a short time, upon another eminence close by. An Irishman, one of Col. Lippincotts headquarters men who was called "Daddy Hall," seemed quite uneasy on account of the presence of the

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<sup>6</sup>Blue, born in North Carolina in 1793, had come to Montgomery when Alabama was still a territory. He was a leading citizen, and at the centennial celebration in 1876 read the Declaration of Independence publicly without faltering and without benefit of eyeglasses. See William Warren Rogers, *Alabama News Magazine* (January, 1976), 8-10.

enemy. He had charge of the Colonel's horse and frequently exclaimed, "What are you doing here? Why do we stop here? Why don't we go on? I don't believe the Colonel knows that the red-coated rascals are so near." Paymaster Dexter, seeing the perturbation of the poor fellow said, "Daddy Hall, you are afraid! You are a trembling coward."<sup>7</sup> The Milesian's<sup>8</sup> ire was aroused at these words, and looking the paymaster in the face with a scornful curl of his lip, he said, "Be jabbers! no, Masither Dexther, I'm not afeerd more nor yez be; but faith; ye'll find yourself that one good pair of heels is worth two hands afore night; if ye dont call Daddy Hall a spalpeen."<sup>9</sup> And so he did; for before sunset the Americans were flying before their pursuers, more grateful to their heels than hands for safety. This Mr. Dexter was living in Providence in 1848, ninety two years of age. Samuel Dexter an Uncle of the subject of our sketch, was a member of Congress from 1793 to 1795 from Massachusetts and Senator in 1799-1800. From the Senate, he was transferred to the Cabinet of President John Adams, first to the War Department and afterward, to the Treasury Department.<sup>10</sup>

Hon. Samuel Dexter, father of the foregoing, was a gentleman of moral, intellectual and Christian excellence. He originated from Dedham, Massachusetts, where he lived till the Revolutionary war, when he removed with his family to Woodstock, Connecticut, and where by direction of his last will, he was buried. He was a member of the first Provincial Congress in Massachusetts, but lived afterwards chiefly in retirement, greatly respected until his death in 1810. He founded the professorship of Sacred Literature in the University in

<sup>7</sup>Benson: J. Lossing, *Field-Book Of The American Revolution*, I (Cottonport Louisiana, 1972. First printed 1850-1852), 631. Paymaster Dexter's first name is not given.

<sup>8</sup>The word "Milesian" referred to a legendary Spanish ancestor of the Irish, and the term came to mean an Irishman.

<sup>9</sup>"Spalpeen" is an Irish word meaning a scamp or a rascal. George Washington's difficulties in New York, including White Plains, are well documented, but, for example, see Don Higginbotham, *The War Of American Independence, Military Attitudes, Policies, And Practices 1763-1789* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1977), 161.

<sup>10</sup>Based on comparative ages, it seems probable that this Samuel Dexter was the brother, not the uncle, of Andrew. Also, since Andrew's father was named Samuel, it seems unlikely that brothers would share the same first name. See *Biographical Directory Of The American Congress 1774-1971* (Washington, 1971), 855-856.



Cambridge.<sup>11</sup>

The Dexters were originally of Rhode Island stock, branches of them removing to Massachusetts. To this day some of them are to be met with in Providence and adjoining cities and towns. Mr. Winthrop, in his *History of New England*, makes favorable mention of Thomas Dexter and Rev. Samuel Dexter in the days of and during the Governorship of the original John Winthrop.<sup>12</sup> These probably belonged to the family that emigrated from England. In his *History of Rhode Island*, Mr. Arnold gives prominence to Mr. Gregory Dexter. This gentleman, in 1653, was elected President of one of the Assemblies of the Providence Plantations, namely, that of the Mainland towns. In 1654, he appears in the position of Town Clerk of Providence. Again, in 1677, he is associated as an attorney with Roger Williams and Arthur Fenner in a suit about titles between the towns of Warwick and Providence, in which he was successful for the latter.<sup>13</sup>

At a suitable age, the founder of our city was entered at Dartmouth College where during his entire Collegiate Course, he was the class-mate of the great Daniel Webster. He frequently stated in Montgomery, that he was awarded at graduation, the *first prize* while Mr. Webster obtained only the *second*. This seemed to be a satisfaction to him in view of the high position attached by his class-mate and his own comparatively obscure position in life. If he could not claim an influence in the councils of the Republic, he could boast with just pride of having carried off the highest honor of Dartmouth College from the leading intellect of America. That success in the Academic contest of his early days led him to assert that if he had chosen the political instead of the financial field, he

<sup>11</sup>Josiah Quincy, *The History Of Harvard University* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1840), 296-298.

<sup>12</sup>The reference to these early Dexters was not found by the editor in James Kendall Hosmer (Editor), *Winthrop's Journal "History of New England"* (New York, 1980).

<sup>13</sup>The reference is to Samuel Green Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* (New York, 1859-1860). Gregory Dexter was influential in the colony. See Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island A History* (New York, 1975), 372, 383; James Ernst, *Roger Williams New England Firebrand* (New York, 1932), 227, 233; Samuel Hugh Brockunier, *The Irrepressible Democrat Roger Williams* (New York, 1940), 166, 182.



could have made his mark in the Halls of Congress and helped to shape the political destinies of the Country.<sup>14</sup>

When he quitted College, the Federal party to which his family belonged was in power under the lead of John Adams as President. His uncle then Secretary of the Treasury placed him in a position under him in this department at the seat of government. Here he continued until the advent of President Jefferson in 1801. Mr. Dexter used to recur to the visit of Mr. Jefferson to the Treasury office when he announced to the Federal Clerks that it was imperatively necessary to displace them with Republicans since "few office holders die and never resign." This visit and Commencement closed his connection with the Treasury department and Federal office.

He retired to Boston and possessing ample means entered the financial world. Failing to obtain a charter for a Bank in Massachusetts he secured one in Rhode Island where his Bank had for a time, a great degree of success. The bills circulated widely coming even down into the Southern States. The power of the Bank was keenly felt by other Banking institutions of the country. Mr. Dexter caught the spirit of speculation and plunged in without due consideration. Among other ventures in real estate, he erected "Exchange Coffee-house" at an immense cost, a building containing over two hundred rooms and at that time, the largest hotel establishment in the United States. The destruction of this costly structure by fire, uninsured, superadded to other unsuccessful investments and financial reverses left him insolvent.<sup>15</sup> To escape imprisonment for debt which was then allowable in Massachusetts, he moved with his family to Windsor, Nova

<sup>14</sup>At Dartmouth, Webster was a good but not a brilliant student. Not unexpectedly, he was a brilliant debater. See Sydney George Fisher, *The True Daniel Webster* (Philadelphia and London, 1911), 52; Irving H. Bartlett, *Daniel Webster* (New York, 1978), 23. If Dexter and Webster graduated at the same time, the date was August 26, 1801.

<sup>15</sup>The fashionable Exchange Coffee House was built in 1804. It was easily the leading hotel in Boston, and when it burned in 1818, the flames could be seen 50 miles away. See Carl Seaburg, *Boston Observer* (Boston, 1871), 130; Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Boston Taverns And Tavern Clubs* (Boston, 1917), 108. In 1791 one Andrew Dexter, in all likelihood a relative of the founder of Montgomery, was mentioned as a director and one of the founders of Providence Bank. See Mack Thompson, *Moses Brown Reluctant Reformer* (Chapel Hill, 1962), 250.

Scotia, where he remained several years. Just after the close of the last war with Great Britain, he returned to the United States and resolved to try his fortune in the South West, at this time presenting such an inviting field for speculation. The Alabama land sales at Milledgeville, Georgia, attracted his attention. He attended those sales in July 1817 and without a personal inspection and with no other information than was afforded by the maps at the Land Office he purchased at first, the west half of the south west quarter of section seven in township sixteen of Range eighteen.

In August, 1817, he also, purchased the balance of that quarter section. Upon those portions of land, the eastern part of our present city between Jefferson Street on the North and South Alabama Street on the South is located.

Under the law at that sale, purchasers were required to pay five per cent of the purchase money down and were allowed forty days to pay the balance. Mr. Dexter started at once to view his purchase, coming through the Creek Indian Nation and through a comparative wilderness, over the most wretched apologies for roads and ferries. Mr. John G. Klinck, one of the first merchants of Montgomery and who died at Memphis, Tennessee, last year aged seventy-five years, says in one of his letters, that while he was halting at a Mr. Evans' house at the fork of the road leading to Fort Jackson (about where R. H. Brewer now resides) Mr. Andrew Dexter and a Mr. Spears arrived both being attacked with bilious fever (Dexter slightly).<sup>16</sup> Mr. Spears during his illness, was prescribed for by Dr. Dabney an eminent physician from Virginia, but died about two weeks after his arrival. Every attention was bestowed by Mr. Dexter and the family of Mr. Evans. After the death of Mr. Spears, Mr. Dexter proceeded to examine his purchase and soon returned, says, Mr. Klinck, being much flattered with the prospect of its advantages for a town site, and its central position for the Court House when the county

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<sup>16</sup>Fort Jackson was between the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers at the ancient site of Fort Toulouse built by the French. It was constructed by Andrew Jackson and his men after the battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814. Like Fort Toulouse, Fort Jackson fell into decay and was later abandoned. See W. Stuart Harris, *Dead Towns Of Alabama* (University, Alabama, 1977), 42. The actual sale of lands began August 4, 1817.

became sub-divided. He communicated all of his plans to Mr. Klinch — that they were jointly to use their influence in drawing all the traders to the place intended for the town, which would necessarily draw the trade to that point, except from those on the road near Line Creek. Mr. Klinck advised him to visit Jonathan C. *Farley*, carpenter, and Harris and Andrew A. Laprade, traders, and Dr. Morrow, a practicing physician, offer each a lot gratuitous, and proceed immediately to lay off the town. He acted upon that sage advice and attracted these gentlemen to his purchase.

Mistaking the land which he had purchased, he employed a Mr. Hall to survey and lay off the North West Quarter into lots. Before the survey was completed, he concluded to locate the town on more elevated ground which was really his purchase, embraced in the Eastern part of our present city. Mr. John Blackwell (uncle of the late Peter B. Mastin) made this survey and the arrangements of squares and lots in that section of the city as they now exist. Mr. Klinch says that Mr. Dexter gave him the choice of lots and the privilege of naming the town, and he adopted that of "New Philadelphia." He claims too to have erected the second house here. Jonathan C. Farly having put up the first framed store house

Mr. Dexter really was not able to comply with the terms of his purchase. He fortunately formed the acquaintance of Mr. John Falconer who advanced the money and became interested in the sale of lots. The patent is recorded in the office of the Judge of Probate of this county in the name of John Falconer, assignee. Hence it is that the first titles run from that gentleman. The sales of lots were made by Mr. Dexter who would prepare the deeds for Mr. Falconer's signature. He also assumed a share in the erection of buildings.

Notwithstanding his rapid sales of lots at fair prices, Mr. Dexter seemed to be continually involved in debts, and law-suits. He was endowed with energy and perseverance combined with unusual intelligence but he was visionary; too sanguine without a due amount of business prudence and foresight. His calculations on paper were splendid and convincing to him but he could not manage to realize them in practice. Hence the major part of his grand purchases of land

in our present city passed from his possession with scarcely any lasting profit to him.

Disappointed here and smitten by the Texas fever, in 1833, he visited the Eastern part of Texas from which he wrote back most glowing accounts. Upon his return, he resolved to dispose of the remainder of his real estate in this city and try his fortune in that new country. Many of his lots, he swapped off to merchants here for dry goods. He was overreached in that trade by having old goods palmed upon him which had lain on the shelves for years. This last transaction about closed him out financially. He was arrested in Mobile for a small debt, and while under arrest for the same, as was then allowed, sometime during 1837, he died.

Mr. Dexter, when he retired from the Treasury Department to Boston, married Miss Charlotte Authorpe Morton, sister of Governor Morton.<sup>17</sup> Coming himself from an influential Federalist family, and by marriage connecting himself with one of the leading Republican or Jeffersonian families, he often wondered why he had not made better use of his double advantage politically. He was frequently heard to lament, when worried for debts, the inferior position he occupied, notwithstanding the advantages of high family connection, compared with that attained by Daniel Webster, without wealth or family influence, whom he had outstripped at College. His amiable and accomplished consort died in Montgomery, August 17th, 1819, and was among the first females interred in our beautiful cemetery, the west end or old part of which her husband had presented to the town for a burying ground.

Mr. Dexter's sons were well and favorably known to many of our present citizens, Andrew Alfred and Samuel. The latter was engaged in business at Mobile when he died. The former was the first Chief Engineer of the Montgomery and West Point Railroad. He had been formerly engaged in the construction of the Charleston and Hamburg Railroad. Few men were his equal in the engineering profession in the South, and his mental abilities and culture were of a high order. His widow and children, the latter, grandchildren of the founder

<sup>17</sup>For a sketch of Morton see Dumas Malone (Editor), *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIII (New York, 1934), 259-260.

of Montgomery, still reside here. We cannot close this hurried and imperfect sketch, without expressing the opinion that our city will fail in its duty and a proper respect for the memory of its founder, if it does not erect a suitable monument in our Cemetery to perpetuate his name and fame. True, it is impossible to identify his grave in Mobile and re-inter his remains, but a lofty column can be erected in a conspicuous part of the Cemetery. The present City authorities by giving this matter immediate attention and thus making amends for the past oversight or neglect on the part of their predecessors, will receive the plaudits of the citizens.



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**DEFENDER OF THE VOTELESS: JOSEPH C. MANNING  
VIEWS THE DISFRANCHISEMENT ERA IN ALABAMA**

by

Paul M. Pruitt, Jr.

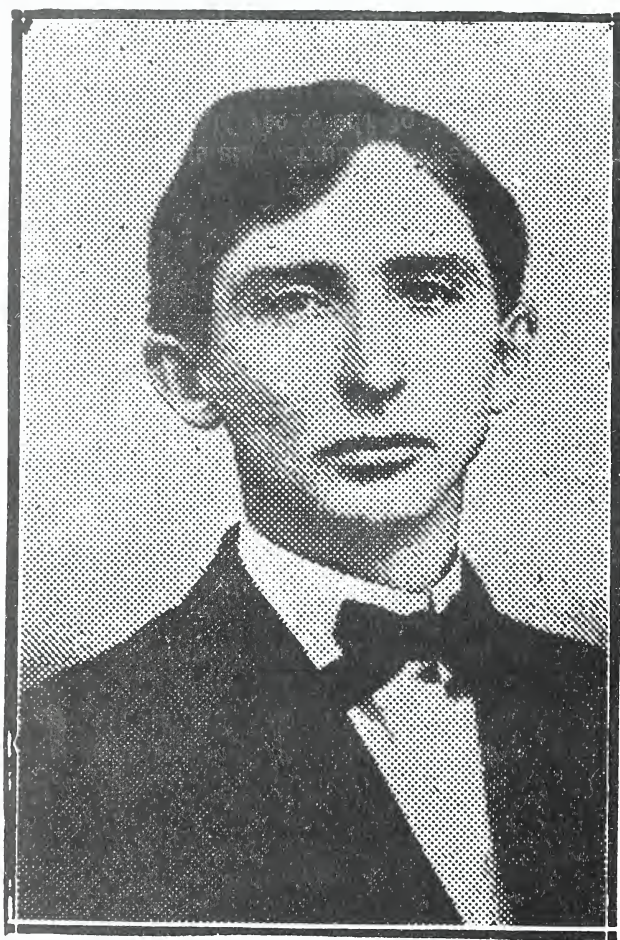
In November 1901 the voters of Alabama adopted a new constitution by an official count of 108,613 to 81,734. The document contained stringent poll tax and literacy requirements, and was patently designed to disfranchise ninety-nine per cent of the state's black citizens. In addition, though future United States Senator Tom Heflin and other pro-constitution spokesmen ostentatiously wrapped themselves in the mantle of white supremacy, it was no secret that the suffrage standards would disfranchise thousands of hill country yeomen. As one North Alabama editor matter-of-factly noted, such extreme measures were deemed necessary by the Black Belt political bosses of Alabama in order "to perpetuate the power of the Democratic Party." The men whose voices were to be silenced, black and white, were almost entirely Republicans or Populists, members of the very groups which had repeatedly united, during the tumultuous 1890's, to challenge Bourbon rule. The Constitutional Convention of 1901, dominated by planters, lien-merchants, and representatives of New South Industrialism, made a conscious decision to follow the lead of other Southern states in discarding the traditional means of overcoming insurgency — namely, ballot box stuffing. But Democratic leaders made sure that the old methods went out in a blaze of glory. The November margin of victory was provided by returns from eleven Black Belt counties where, as Republican Postmaster Joseph C. Manning reported, the great majority of "Negroes were recorded as having voted to disfranchise themselves." With a convincing show of force, the Democratic Party had delivered Alabama into the hands of "the virtuous and the intelligent." The black editor of the *Huntsville Journal* spoke the truth when he cried out: "It is good bye with the poor white folks and niggers now, for the train of disfranchisement is on the rail."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sheldon Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama* (Princeton, 1969), 175-229; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South* (Baton Rouge, 1951), 321-349; Joseph Columbus Manning, *The Fadeout of Populism: Pot and Kettle in*

## THE COLORED ALABAMIAN.

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MR. JOSEPH C. MANNING.

Will address the colored citizens of Montgomery soon

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The twentieth-century South is often depicted as a place in which demagogic politicians, often ex-Populists or populist Democrats, divert the white masses with attacks on the good name and civil rights of helpless blacks. The stereotype has a basis in fact, for as Postmaster Manning once wrote, the planter-merchant "Oligarchy" employed the Negro "as a political scape-goat, that he, in his unfortunate condition, . . . [might] condone and cloak the political rascality of those who usurp the control of government from both white and blacks."<sup>2</sup> Yet as these words suggest, there were white men who resisted the politics of hate, who refused to submit to what Manning called a "shotgun setting" of political tyranny; and often such men, by clear-headed observation of the evils of biracial disfranchisement, became lifelong advocates of ballot freedom and human rights. The following is part of the story of one such individual.

In January, 1901, when Joseph Columbus Manning took over as Postmaster of Alexander City, a thriving central Alabama railroad town, he had behind him almost a decade of political activity. The slight, angular Manning, sandy-haired and just thirty-one, had made his reputation as the founder and "Evangel" of the state People's Party. Counted out time and again by an entrenched Democracy, he and his cohorts campaigned persuasively for "a free ballot and a fair count"; Manning "encouraged to the front hundreds of country orators who sprang up amazingly, many of them with the guts and gizzard . . . to make it mighty disconcerting for the old-time local Democratic Party leaders."<sup>3</sup> From 1894 to 1896 the na-

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*Combat* (New York, 1928), 49-50; *Rockford People's Courier*, July 11, 1901, and the *Camp Hill Times*, July 12, 1901; Joseph C. Manning, *Letting the South Alone: Class Government that Defrauds Whites and Blacks* (Birmingham, 1903), 6-7, 9; Dallas County, with a voting-age male population of 2,525 whites and 9,871 blacks, voted for the new constitution by a count of 8,125 to 235.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph C. Manning, *The Rise and Reign of the Bourbon Oligarchy* (Birmingham, 1904), 18-21. See W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (1941; reprinted, New York, 1969), 252-263, and C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (2nd rev. ed.; New York, 1969), 67-109.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph C. Manning, *From Five To Twenty-Five, His Early Life As Recalled by Joseph Columbus Manning* (New York, 1929), 38-39; William Warren Rogers, *The One-Gallused Rebellion: Agrarianism in Alabama, 1865-1896* (Baton Rouge, 1970), 189, 207, 230-243; Paul M. Pruitt, Jr., "A Changing of the Guard: Joseph C. Manning and Populist Strategy in the Fall of 1894," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XL (Spring and Summer, 1978), 20-36.

tional People's Party sought an alliance with the national Democracy, to the dismay of most Southern Populists — yet even so, Manning's exposures of Black Belt vote frauds were instrumental in electing and seating two Populist and two Republican congressmen from Alabama in the Fifty-fourth Congress. Realizing that the People's Party was faltering, Manning joined the ranks of the Republicans, serving as Alabama correspondent for the New Orleans *Daily Item*, an important Republican organ. Both as a newspaperman and later as a postmaster, he worked with anti-constitution Republicans, Populists, and Democrats against the disfranchisement movement which threatened the state. Of the document adopted in 1901, he commented that it was the work of a "stupendous partisan machine," and concluded that "not in all the history of . . . civilized men can there be found a parallel to the depravity to which this Alabama autocracy . . . has come."<sup>4</sup> For the remainder of his time in Alexander City, he would be without real power to change the currents of life in Alabama. But as an observer, and as an official forced to deal with the day-to-day inequities of life in a class-oriented, racist society, he grew. In the end he became a bold pamphleteer, an experienced civil rights lobbyist, a clear voice of conscience. And in many respects, the growth which followed defeat began in the Alexander City Post Office lobby.

Manning had always sympathized with the bulldozed black voters of the South. As a Populist he had scoffed at the theory that ballot box-stuffing was necessary to prevent "Negro domination," saying: "The domination we have to fear is that of the man with a black heart, without special reference to 'hide'."<sup>5</sup> Now, all his instincts of fair play were aroused as he saw "the colored people who came in for mail . . . huddle in a corner until all whites were waited upon." This was a challenge he could meet directly, and so, as he later recalled, he "went into the office lobby for two or three days, telling those who came for mail to get in line as they came — first come, first served, old or young, black or white." Manning had a commanding presence, and he was able to persuade the

<sup>4</sup>Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York, 1976), 436-492; Rogers, *One-Gallused Rebellion*, 287-289; Manning, *Letting the South Alone*, 9.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph C. Manning, *Politics of Alabama* (Birmingham, 1893), 20-21.



startled townsfolk to accept the new system. They were *not* pleased, though, when he ordered his young lady clerk to begin calling black customers by their proper titles; he had, in fact, speedily decided not to tolerate the standards practice of speaking to black men and women, ministers and school principals, as though they were children. "You can just drop the Molly, Mandy, Dick stuff," he told his employee. "You can treat all patrons alike." These instructions touched upon all the chords of racial and sexual paranoia prevalent among many of the "best people," and for a time there was an angry "yak-yak" around town. Eventually, overt opposition to the new reign of courtesy slacked off, particularly after the clerk's mother, a Southern woman with democratic sensibilities of her own, told Manning that he was in the right. With the support of such level-headed white folks, he had won a small victory for fair treatment of human beings.<sup>6</sup>

With the passage of time, Joseph Manning became even more assertive, more willing to "rub the fur the wrong way" in Alexander City. Whatever the Constitution of Alabama might say, he devoutly believed that "God intended . . . every man [to] have equal opportunity under the law." Because he was prepared to act upon this principle, Manning increasingly served as an advocate and spokesman for the town's black population. In 1902, for example, he learned that local officials had placed only one Alexander City Negro on the voting lists, though hundreds of black men were of voting age. One black leader was "repeatedly told that the registrars were not registering that day," Manning subsequently wrote, observing that many "Negroes of property and good standing were humiliated by the same treatment." Incensed, he gathered together a number of the applicants and, according to a testimonial drawn up at a meeting of black citizens, led them "to the registration officers and made personal plea for fair treatment." Finally about twenty Negroes were entered on the city rolls.<sup>7</sup> On another occasion Manning encouraged two black men, one a

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<sup>6</sup>J.C. Manning to Walter White, December 20, 1928, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Papers, Library of Congress. White was an NAACP official who befriended Manning during his last illness, 1928-1930.

<sup>7</sup>*The Crisis: A Magazine of the Darker Races*, II (August, 1911), 150; Petition by the "Undersigned Colored Citizens of Alexander City," sent to Booker T. Washington, November 17, 1904, in the Booker T. Washington Papers, Library of Congress.



veteran of the Spanish-American War and the other a land-owning farmer, in their aim of founding a general store. It was soon apparent that the white storekeepers of Alexander City were unhappy as the prospect of losing some of their black trade; nevertheless, the two men opened their business in a downtown building secured from a sympathetic property-owner, and Manning was one of their first customers. For his pains, for standing up for equality of opportunity, he "caught the devil in criticism" from those supply merchants, staunch defenders of white solidarity and social segregation, whose monopoly control over black consumers was being threatened. He had personally crossed the color line to strike a blow for the independence of black people, an offense not to be forgotten.<sup>8</sup>

There is no doubt that Manning tried to become part of the social and civic life of his town. He was an active member of the Methodist Church, and a founder of the Industrial and Development Association of Alexander City; indeed, for a time he was responsible for the Association's autumn "Street Fair and Farmer's Jubilee." After a disastrous fire of June, 1902, destroyed more than thirty buildings, Postmaster Manning was the first to get to a working telegraph wire; soon, under his direction, food and supplies were arriving from Birmingham and Montgomery. His devotion to duty naturally earned him praise from the solid citizens of the community. One previously dubious businessman wrote that Manning "has been kind, accommodating, . . . and has given us by far the best service we have ever had."<sup>9</sup> Yet "Joe" never felt secure in the esteem of his neighbors. Years later he stated that his civic heroics were among the "few things that held to me enough people to enable my living in Alexander City, in the face of my views." Mere attempts to be even-handed with members of both races, he had found, were enough to raise angry protests. Still, he simply could not forbear from criticizing a growing number of blatant legal persecutions — such as a

<sup>8</sup>J.C. Manning to Walter White, December 20, 1928, NAACP Papers; Guion Griffis Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy," in Dewey Grantham, ed., *The South and the Sectional Image* (New York, 1967), 56-78.

<sup>9</sup>Alexander City *Outlook*, January 11, February 8, April 5, May 3, 1901; Dadeville *Free Press*, October 24, 1901; J.C. Manning to W.E. Chandler, November 14, 1901, William E. Chandler Papers, Library of Congress; Jennie Lee Kelley, *A History of Alexander City* (Alexander City, 1974), Part III.

twenty-year prison term given in 1905 to one Josh Grimes of Alexander City, a "black brute" who had allegedly wrenched the arm of a little white girl. From his dealings with a variety of black folk, Manning knew that they were not "a menace to American civilization," as Democratic politicians and apologists claimed; rather, most blacks were striving "amid difficulties known only to God and them, to raise the standard of their people." Worse culprits by far were the respectable citizens of Alexander City and other towns — middle class whites who, in the belief that "niggers" and "white trash" must be taught stern lessons, had allowed their judicial officers to become "perverters of human rights and constitutional liberties." Gradually, through bitter experience, Manning perfected his understanding of the disfranchisement-era South. In the long run, none of his knowledge went to waste.<sup>10</sup>

From 1901 to 1905, Manning centered his hopes for the political reformation of the South on President Theodore Roosevelt and his chief Alabama lieutenant, Tuskegee educator and boss Booker T. Washington. Manning had met Roosevelt as early as 1895, while on a lecture tour of the North. Roosevelt was then famous as a reform police commissioner in New York City, and Manning was confident that, as President, he would continue to be a dynamic opponent of machine politics. Joe was therefore somewhat shocked when the President, on Washington's advice, appointed conservative Democrat Thomas Goode Jones as Judge of Alabama's Middle District. On the other hand, Manning respected Washington as a manipulator of Republicans and Democrats, rejoiced in his influence with Roosevelt, and between 1902 and 1904 waged with him a successful fight against the "Lily-White" (pro-disfranchisement) faction of the Alabama GOP. After the infamous Washington-Roosevelt "dinner at the White House," when Southern journalists denounced the President for committing the "damnable outrage" of inviting a "nigger" to lunch, Manning praised Roosevelt for his "recognition . . . of the greatest leader of the colored race." It seemed to the impatient postmaster that he could, with the help of those powerful friends, enlighten the nation concerning the "disfranchisement system" and "the

<sup>10</sup>J.C. Manning to Walter White, December 20, 1928, NAACP Papers; Alexander City *Outlook*, March 31, 1905; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 350-355; Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 21.

results arising from its application."<sup>11</sup>

His prayers seemed on the point of being answered in the spring of 1903, when Federal District Attorney Warren S. Reese, Jr., an ex-Populist, brought peonage charges against more than a dozen central Alabama planters and sawmill operators. Using information uncovered by secret agents, probably including Manning, Reese broke up a ring of "convict lease" slave drivers and corrupt county officials. The New York *Evening Post* and other national journals, encouraged by Washington and Manning, covered the trials in sensational detail. The Northern public, though, was not profoundly moved by the revelation that guarded stockades and shackles were the lot of scores — doubtless hundreds — of black Alabamians. Even the news that some peons were white failed to spark a drive for a more thorough federal investigation. Roosevelt, already courting the votes of Bourbon Democrats for the next presidential election, was silent; his officials in South Alabama, where evidence of debt slavery was particularly strong, were unwilling or unable to secure indictments. Within a few months, Alabama politicians led by Tom Heflin were openly denouncing Reese and the peonage prosecutions.<sup>12</sup> Understandably depressed, Manning was fearful that the Bourbons' assault on civil liberties had gained national credibility. Now he was compelled, he felt, to strike out on his own with an appeal to the country. The odds were against him, but if he could gain the attention of a sufficiently large audience, he might — with financial aid from such "conscience" Republicans as Oswald Garrison Villard of the *Evening Post* — pressure Roosevelt to take a stronger civil rights stance. In Sep-

<sup>11</sup>J.C. Manning to W.E. Chandler, October 5, 1901, Chandler Papers; J.C. Manning to Booker T. Washington, January 10, 22, 1905, Washington Papers; J.C. Manning to Walter White, December 15, 17, 1928, NAACP Papers; Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 28. For information on the Alabama GOP in the early twentieth century, see David E. Alsobrook, "Mobile's Forgotten Progressive — A.N. Johnson, Editor and Entrepreneur," *Alabama Review*, XXXII (July, 1979), 188-202; for information on Roosevelt's 1901 luncheon with Washington, see Richard Sherman, *The Republican Party and Black America: From McKinley to Hoover, 1896-1933* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1973), 27-29.

<sup>12</sup>Pete Daniel, *The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South, 1901-1969* (Urbana, Illinois, 1972), 43-46; A.P. Fuquay to Booker T. Washington, November 18, 1904, Washington Papers; J.C. Manning to W.E. Chandler, November 28, 1916, Chandler Papers.

tember, 1904, on the eve of TR's reelection, Manning published the fruits of his work and thought in pamphlet form, under the appropriate title, *The Rise and Reign of the Bourbon Oligarchy*.

*Rise and Reign* was not Manning's first published work, nor would it be his last. When he died in 1930, he had at least six books or pamphlets to his credit, as well as dozens of newspaper articles.<sup>13</sup> In all these writings, however, Manning emphasized one basic theme — that the leaders of the Southern Democratic Party, the leaders of Southern society and economic life, had systematically denied basic freedoms to members of the biracial lower class. Moreover, he accused the spokesmen of the ruling Oligarchy of fomenting a double-edged race hatred among yeoman class whites, corrupting and distracting them, and using them as instruments in "keeping down" the blacks. Thus "the hardships, sufferings and wrongs heaped upon the blacks . . . [under] the institution of chattel slavery" had operated "to bring about a condition by which the whites of the South have come to endure a yoke of political serfdom." More than any of Manning's other works, *Rise and Reign* makes a detailed and statistical proof of these charges. Manning was clearly acquainted with the census records for Alabama and other Southern states, as well as congressional election returns from all over the nation. Furthermore, by 1904 he had begun to exchange ideas and information with several black journalists and intellectuals, including T. Thomas Fortune of the *New York Age*, and the Reverend R.C. Judkins, subsequently editor of the *Montgomery Colored Alabamian*. These factors, combined with Manning's emotional intensity, made *Rise and Reign* a message of incisive, accurate, and start-

<sup>13</sup>Manning had been building up his Northern contacts even before the urgency of the peonage scandals. In April, 1903, he delivered a speech before the Middlesex Club of Boston. This shrewd and fiery talk, which he subsequently printed as a pamphlet entitled *Letting the South Alone*, was limited in historical and statistical scope to the state of Alabama. By the time he wrote *Rise and Reign*, his thought embraced the whole region, and his sociological observations were more sophisticated. In addition to the works already cited, Manning published (New York, 1916), a pamphlet in support of Republican presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes, entitled *Sectionalism: Rise and Reign of the Southern Political Oligarchy*. For Manning's later newspaper articles, see the *Montgomery Colored Alabamian*, March 14, 1914, September 18, 1915, February 15, 1916, and the *Washington, D.C., Bee*, May-August, 1919.



lingly radical scope.<sup>14</sup>

Manning began by praising the white farmers of North Alabama as basically "brave and patriotic men, who dared to aspire to a true democracy." Called upon to defend slavery, these freedom-loving people had frequently opposed "the revolutionary and fiery movement of secession." During the agrarian revolt of the 1890's, correspondingly, white and black reformers united to insist "that real democracy means the people shall rule, and that a real democrat is one who" would place "a fair and honest ballot . . . inviolate" in the hands of the people. Allegedly, Manning continued, the Bourbons and businessmen who wrote the constitution of 1901 did so in order to eliminate black voting power — again, supposedly, for the benefit of white citizens. But this rationale, which the Populists had vigorously opposed, did not mean that the freedmen had ceased to play a part in the conservative scheme. Neither the constitution nor the racist propaganda accompanying it had altered the nature or location of power in Alabama, as Manning showed by citing a notorious fact:

The method by which the . . . oligarchy fastens its hold upon the Democratic machine . . . is [by] basing the representations in the conventions of the party and in the Alabama legislature upon an apportionment embracing the disfranchised blacks in the Black Belt, . . . thereby prohibiting control . . . by the white counties.<sup>15</sup>

And still the bosses of Bourbon regimes in Alabama and across the South insisted that "the soul [*sic*] issue of paramount importance is the race issue." Assertive and grandiloquent, the planter-politicians presumed to speak for the whole South, and did so with such assurance that few Northerners doubted

<sup>14</sup>Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 8; J.C. Manning to Governor Emmett O'Neal, April 11, 1911, Box 203, Governors' Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

<sup>15</sup>Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 5-8, 9, 10-13, 17. Manning glosses over the Reconstruction era, a time when, he feels, the black and white masses were alienated from each other by the presence of the Carpetbaggers. Even so, he has little respect for the Democratic "Redeemers." "Violence and fraud," he says, were "seemingly a pastime employed" by Democrats, whether the object was "to count out and intimidate 'Carpetbaggers' and 'niggers'" or to over-rule the wishes of the white yeoman majority.



the fact of white unity and majority rule within the region. Based on his personal knowledge and recent studies, however, Manning had a different tale to tell.<sup>16</sup>

Using election returns from several 1902 contests, he revealed the limited extent of white "backing behind the oligarchy." South Carolina's seven-man congressional slate, he pointed out, had been elected after polling an aggregate of 29,343 out of 32,185 votes cast; yet there were 130,374 white men of voting age in the state. Turning to Mississippi, Manning noted that favorite son John Sharp Williams had been elected to Congress without opposition, and that Mississippi's entire delegation (all Democrats) had received a total of 18,058 votes, though 150,922 white men were old enough to vote. In Alabama, where the Republican Party was relatively vigorous and where the Democrats had made white supremacy a campaign issue, Democratic incumbent William D. Jelks had won the gubernatorial race by a count of 67,649 to 24,190; even so, taking 3,000 black voters into consideration, fewer than 100,000 of Alabama's 230,000 adult white men had voted. Plainly, the Democratic voters of these states were a minority of the potential white voting population, and it was logical to conclude that the majority of white men were either disfranchised outright by state poll taxes and literacy tests, or rendered apathetic by the certainty of Democratic victory. Manning, characteristically, summed up the situation in strong words. "The great mass of [white] voters in the South have been dashed back into sullen silence and into hopeless acquiescence, and, under present conditions, they are as helpless as are the blacks upon whose necks the Bourbon heel was long since pressed."<sup>17</sup>

Manning did not claim that white farmers were free from the taint of racism. For years, instead of discussing "issues really effecting [*sic*] the welfare of the Southern people," the disfranchisers and their political ancestors had bombarded the white South with "an amazing tirade of abuse of the Negro." Considering the persistence of the Tom Heflins, it was no wonder that a growing number of white people were "misused

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 12, 14-16; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism*, 206-208; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 326-337.

and aroused beyond reason" on the subject of race relations, and therefore "inflamed to further subservience to the oligarchy." For by 1904 Manning saw distinctly what some reformers had not seen in the 1890's: that political and judicial demagoguery, together with related crimes of social "vengeance" directed against black people, all furthered the larger interests of the Democratic Party. He was willing to state, for argument's sake, that black men sometimes raped white women, "although seldom it may occur," but he was utterly disgusted with the way that editors, clergymen, and educators condoned the speeches of bigots and the actions of mobs. He saw, though, that it was to the advantage of the whole ruling class, the "best people," to promote racial conflict. "It is cruel, it is shameful, . . . it is infamous," he cried, "to so ingeniously work up the sentiment of lawlessness as against the colored race."<sup>18</sup>

One particular effect of Democratic Negrophobia, Manning knew, was the reinforcement of the old belief that black people, as a race, were prone to criminality. In order to counter this stereotype he examined the census records and found that in 1890, fewer than 25,000 of the nation's nine million blacks were sitting in prisons or working on chain gangs; on the average, too, black convicts were jailed for less serious crimes than those committed by their white counterparts. Obviously, he noted, "both races supply violators of law," and yet American Negroes had not made "so bad a showing for a people out of bondage, with their poor opportunities and environments." His personal conception of the black man's character, moreover, was comprehensive and to the point. "Beginning in ignorance and want," he asserted, the freedmen have "risen to education, to property, and to usefulness . . . Colored homes, colored farms, colored schools, colored churches, colored banks, colored stores, colored teachers, colored doctors, colored lawyers — this is evidence that this race has not been wholly in idleness and depravity!"<sup>19</sup> Thus Manning revealed himself as a strict en-

<sup>18</sup>Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 8, 18-20; Manning was particularly disgusted with the racism of Mississippi Governor James K. Vardaman and quoted one of the latter's more notorious speeches: "I am just as much opposed to Booker Washington's . . . voting as I am to the voting by the cocoanut-headed, chocolate-colored, typical coon who blacks my boots." See also Sherman, *Republican Party and Black America*, 64.

<sup>19</sup>Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 21-23; for confirmation of Manning's view of black material progress, see Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967), 191-193.

vironmentalist and instinctive egalitarian. Shaped by his principles and personality, *Rise and Reign* is a little-known classic of the early civil rights movement.

In his conclusion, Manning called upon the Congress and federal government to abandon their "let the South alone" policy. "Only national interference," he stated, "can restore and uplift the beaten-down nationality of the Southern citizen."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, though, he was never able to raise sufficient funds to distribute his pamphlet widely; and in any case there are indications that his message would not have found favor among the leaders of Roosevelt's second administration. Privately, indeed, TR railed against "these white men of the South who say that the negro is unfit to cast a vote, and who . . . are equally clamorous in insisting that his votes be counted as cast." But publically from 1905 to 1908, Roosevelt sided with the ruling class of the South in a series of speeches in which he emphasized the Negro's "backwardness" and claimed that law-abiding blacks had a special responsibility to root out rapists and criminals.<sup>21</sup> There was little sentiment in favor of a socio-political reform of the South, Manning found, within the Progressive wing of the Party of Lincoln.

Joseph Manning served as Postmaster in Alexander City until 1909, when he was dismissed for having opposed — together with many black Republicans — Roosevelt's hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft. During the last three years of his service he had published a newspaper, the *Southern American*, a weekly journal "of outspoken opinion with the right spirit of true Americanism." In its pages he continued to insist that the Northern public, from the President down, was wrong to accept planter-class spokesmen at face value as defenders of white supremacy. "The Negro," he said, was "disfranchised because he was and is a Republican more than for the reason that he was and is a Negro." Manning expanded upon the theme of biracial class disfranchisement and degradation in a speech before the May 1909 National Negro Con-

<sup>20</sup>Manning, *Rise and Reign*, 26.

<sup>21</sup>J.C. Manning to Booker T. Washington, October 3, 15, 1904, Washington Papers; Theodore Roosevelt to Owen Wister, April 27, 1906, in Elting E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951-1954), V, 226; Sherman, *Republican Party and Black America*, 52-82.

ference, a meeting which helped launch the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. There, according to an observant W.E.B. DuBois, a "slight, angular, and bitter" Manning demonstrated "that the enslavement of the white workingman was already following the oppression of the black."<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the last twenty years of his life, Manning led a nomadic existence. Writing for black newspapers in New York, Boston, and Washington, lecturing for the NAACP or other black organizations, writing letters to an increasing number of white philanthropists, he embarked on a one-man crusade to free the Southern people. In the process he endured poverty and sorrow — his wife of many years left him because he could not provide a stable home — but he refused to give up until his health failed in the mid-1920's. Even when he lay dying of cancer, he tried to ensure, through a series of remarkable memoirs, that his experience and perspective would not die with him. A passage from his 1928 history, *The Fadeout of Populism*, illustrates the clarity and far-sightedness of his analysis:

The real, the actual and vital issue arising in the South is not any alleged Negro problem . . . That which confronts the people of the South . . . is whether or not the constitution shall be enforced and the liberty principles underlying the foundation of our free government upheld. It is equally as impossible for the constitution . . . to stand for one thing in the free states of the North . . . and for another in the South, where the War Amendments are annulled, as it was impossible for the nation to continue, in Lincoln's time, half slave and half free.

Manning died in New York in May, 1930, surrounded by a few friends who, like himself, were exiles from a system which

<sup>22</sup>Alexander City *Southern American*, March 24, 1909; this is the only known copy of Manning's newspaper. J.C. Manning to W.E. Chandler, February 29, June 15, 1908, Chandler Papers; New York *Times*, June 1, 2, 1909, and the New York *Survey*, June 12, 1909; Charles Flint Kellog, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (Baltimore, 1967), 28-45, 287 n41.

denied them their freedom. As Joseph murmured that he had "no regrets" over the life he had led, some of them must have reflected that few men had ever bought freedom so dearly, or used it so well.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Manning, *Fadeout*, 83; J.C. Manning to Walter White, December 3, 5, 14, 23, 1928, NAACP Papers; New York *Amsterdam News*, May 21, 1930, and the Chicago *Defender*, May 24, 31, 1930. For a detailed treatment of Manning's political and reformist career, see Paul M. Pruitt, Jr., "Joseph C. Manning, Alabama Populist: A Rebel Against the Solid South," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1980.



THE SENATORIAL CAREER OF JEREMIAH CLEMENS,  
1849-1853

by

John M. Martin

When the Alabama legislature met in November, 1849, two vacancies existed in the United States Senate; among the less conspicuous Democratic hopefuls for one of these seats was young and ambitious Jeremiah Clemens. When the Democratic caucus met, however, it nominated two South Alabamians, William Rufus King and Benjamin Fitzpatrick, causing hard feelings among North Alabama representatives who had expected one nominee to come from that part of the state. King was quickly elected, but delay occurred in the second contest because a number of North Alabama Democrats voted for Clemens rather than for Fitzpatrick or for the Whig nominee, Arthur F. Hopkins. After the fifth ballot, in which Fitzpatrick almost secured a majority, the Whigs called for an adjournment. At a subsequent caucus, they considered the "pretensions" of several Democrats along with their chances of being elected by the legislature and selected Clemens as their nominee. They were already familiar with his views because of statements he had made during a recent political campaign and on the streets in Montgomery. Too, he had authorized a friend, L. Ripley Davis, to commit him not to offer any "factious opposition" to the administration of President Zachry Taylor. In the caucus, Davis may have made more extensive commitments than Clemens had intended for him to make. In any case, a large majority of the Whigs signed a pledge to support Clemens. On the following day, after Hopkins' name had been withdrawn, Clemens was elected over Fitzpatrick by a vote of 67-58, the majority including 50 Whig votes and 17 votes from dissident North Alabama Democrats, who voted against the caucus nominee partly because he was from South Alabama and partly because of his pronounced southern rights views.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Huntsville, *Democrat*, December 12, 19, 1849, January 31, 1850; Eufaula, *Democrat*, December 4, 1849; Mobile, *Register and Journal*, November 23, 29, December 1, 3, 1849; James Abercrombie to John C. Stephenson, April 29, 1852, printed in Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, May 28, 1852.

Part of the Democratic press attacked the dissident Democrats for not respecting the caucus nomination and lamented the fact that Clemens had "inflicted a wound" on the Democratic Party. One newspaper spoke of a "secret understanding," a "degrading" bargain that had been made. North Alabama Democrats, on the other hand, defended their action on the grounds that Clemens was better qualified than his opponent and that North Alabama deserved a senator. Meanwhile, the Whigs exulted. One wrote, for example, that the election of Clemens represented "the tallest lick" the Whigs had struck "since the organization of the State." There were good reasons, he said, for thinking that Clemens would support the administration. The Chivalry had been "completely discomfited" because one of their brightest stars had been placed in eclipse. A Whig editor expressed satisfaction with the talents of Clemens but indicated concern because he "colored his water a little too deeply."<sup>2</sup>

When they heard reports about possible understandings Clemens had allegedly reached with the Whigs, two of his friends asked him if he had made a pledge to support the Taylor Administration, if his views had changed from those he had formerly held, and if the Whigs had given any pledges to him. Clemens answered immediately in a letter declaring that he was under no obligation, either to Whigs or Democrats, to do anything more than "maintain the interests of the South" and that his course in Congress would be the "best answer" to any charges that had been made. The main struggle in the coming Senate session, he predicted, would be over the slavery question. As yet, nobody knew what position the President would take on that issue. If he followed a southern course, Southerners would "rally as one to his support." If not, they would band together against him. Old party animosities, declared Clemens, ought to be laid aside until the slavery issue was settled. Since the northern people appeared to be united, a successful defense required similar unity in the South. If holding such a view was a crime against the Democratic Party, he had not heard of it. No Whig, he asserted, had asked him

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<sup>2</sup>Mobile, *Register and Journal*, December 3, 1849; Montgomery, *Advertiser and State Gazette*, December 5, 1849; Huntsville, *Democrat*, December 19, 1849; Tuskegee, *Macon Republican*, December 6, 1849; Washington, *The Union*, March 18, 1852.

or expected him to change his principles.<sup>3</sup>

Since the private letter was not highly publicized at the time, Clemens would no doubt have been better off if he had made a public statement outlining his position. Throughout his years in the Senate, critics repeatedly renewed the charge of corrupt bargain and later insisted that Clemens had written a note for use in the Whig caucus in which he promised to support the Taylor Administration. Responsible members of the Whig caucus, however, including the secretary, asserted that there had been no such note and that Clemens had only agreed not to engage in "factionous" opposition to Taylor.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the circumstances, Clemens probably suffered greater political abuse than any Alabama politician had encountered up to that time and later was forced to write public letter after public letter answering charges of bargain and corruption.

Perhaps the youngest member of the Senate, Clemens was awed by the distinguished membership of that body and alarmed about the problems facing it in late 1849. On one occasion, he called the Senate "the most illustrious body" the world had ever known. It included, he said, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun in the "full maturity of their powers" along with others who were of "scarcely inferior reknown." In truth, he added, few then served within the Senate chamber who had not won "reputations as wide as the republic."<sup>5</sup> But he was also aware of several problems in need of solution. In a letter to Governor Henry W. Collier dated December 14, 1849, Clemens joined other members of the Alabama delegation in deploring conditions in Washington. Since free-soil types refused to cooperate in organizing the House of Representatives, they said, activity had been arrested. Alabamians, they felt, were not prepared to accept "enroachment on their rights" or to submit to the exclusion of slavery from the Mexican cession or the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.<sup>6</sup> A few days later, Clemens wrote that he saw "unmistakable evidences"

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<sup>3</sup>Jermiah Clemens to Thomas Wilson and Joseph P. Frazier, November 30, 1849, printed in Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, August 25, 1851.

<sup>4</sup>Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, August 25, 1851; Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, March 2, 19, 22, 1852.

<sup>5</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, November 24, 1852.

<sup>6</sup>Mobile, *Daily Register*, December 25, 1849.

that the Wilmot Proviso was a means to an end, the abolition of slavery. Emancipation or disunion were choices that would have to be faced.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the session he was one of the most vocal critics of what he considered to be northern aggressions.

During his first few weeks in the Senate, Clemens made three telling speeches which led to his being identified as one of the leading champions of the southern cause. In taking a strong position, he was no doubt influenced by his natural impulsiveness, his desire to win political support back in Alabama, and his belief that Southerners should defend their rights from northern attack. Clemens' first major speech, delivered on December 20, was made in opposition to the seating of Father Theobald Mathew, a leading temperance advocate, within the bar of the Senate and included an attack on some of the views held by northern supporters of Mathew. Although he expressed respect for Mathew as a temperance reformer, Clemens charged that he was an "abolitionist agitator" who had engaged in "unwarrantable interference with southern institutions" by denouncing Southerners as little better than a "band of lawless agitators" and calling on others to carry on warfare against the southern system. "I do not believe slavery to be a sin," declared Clemens, "and if it is a sin, it is one with which a foreigner has no business to interfere."

Clemens then turned to an attack on William H. Seward and John P. Hale for their support of Mathew and their criticism of the South. Despite the existence of ever-present misery, poverty, sickness and starvation in the North, he exclaimed, they, with "miserable hypocrisy," persisted in finding fault with the South. Instead, of making their chief staple "the cruelties of the slaveholders and the sufferings of the down-trodden African," they should look closer home for subjects to attack. In northern cities, he declared, there were "thousands of homeless wretches, destitute of food and raiment, and without a thought or an instinct that [was] not colored by crime." In these cities, there were "hordes of wretched females toiling by day and by night for a miserable pittance, bands of little children to whom beggary has descended as an inheri-

<sup>7</sup>Mobile, *Daily Herald and Tribune*, January 20, 1850.

tance" and for whom a state prison would be a "welcome asylum," and numerous factory girls who were forced to work harder than robust men in the South and who were separated from family and friends except by written permission of an overseer. New York City, he asserted, furnished more prison convicts than all fifteen southern states, and Northerners were guilty of burning churches and convents and rioting at the bidding of worthless agitators.

Defending the South, Clemens said that slaves were better clothed and fed than most Northerners and that they worked less and lived happier lives. Although he conceded that there was some violence in the South, he maintained that there were few petty larcenies, few outrages upon unprotected females, and few midnight assassinations. Northerners, he concluded, should correct their "own iniquities," relieve their "own sufferers," and then prate of the "crime and misery" engendered by slavery. The disease of anti-slavery agitation, Clemens felt, was a "desperate one" which required "desperate remedies." He, for one, was prepared to do battle on anti-slavery issues when they arose.<sup>8</sup>

In a later speech critical of a series of Vermont anti-slavery resolutions, Clemens vigorously attacked the resolutions and defended southern rights. These resolutions suggested that slavery could be abolished in all states except the original ones and that the interstate commerce power and other powers in the Constitution could be used to prevent the further spread of slavery and to abolish the slave trade in areas subject to the jurisdiction of Congress. They further directed Vermont representatives in Congress to resist the extension of slavery by any means, to work to secure exclusion of slavery in the District of Columbia as well as the slave trade on the high seas, and to support statehood efforts of California and New Mexico provided that slavery was excluded. Although he voiced objections to the nature of the recommendations made in the resolutions, Clemens supported their being printed so that Southerners could see the falsity of northern declarations that people outside the South did not intend to interfere with slavery. Despite the fact that some senators maintained that

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<sup>8</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 51-52.



there was no danger of interference in the southern states, he declared, the resolutions said otherwise, for they suggested that Congress could abolish slavery in Alabama and other states.

Southerners, Clemens asserted, had never asked for anything beyond "strict adherence to the Constitution" nor had they attacked northern institutions. For the past fifteen years, however, a determined spirit of intermeddling had developed in the North. This spirit of aggression had "madly torn to pieces the most glorious fabric ever erected by human hands." Did, he asked, Northerners believe that Southerners would willingly give up \$900,000,000 in slave property? Did they believe the North could compel submission? What would be the northern reaction if, year after year, Southerners presented resolutions demanding that factories be burned and that white slavery be abolished in the North, or reminded Northerners of crime and pauperism in large cities, juvenile vagrants pilfering wherever opportunities offered, or young women driven to prostitution?

Disclaiming that he was using the "language of menace," Clemens warned that Southerners did not intend to stand still and have their throats cut simply because the butcher was using "honeyed words." They would not, he said, be deceived by the catchwords "conciliation and harmony" nor would their voices be stilled by warnings about imprudent action. The "time for prudential action" was past. Indeed, past talk about prudential action had been unfortunate because it had induced the people of the North to believe that Southerners would not resist aggressions. Northern agitators had now reached the "utmost limit" to which they could go; they could cross it if they dared. Unfortunately, he feared, these demagogues had raised a tempest they could not control and had encouraged activities that would not recede or stand still. For a "miserable partisan purpose," they had excited sectional jealousies and burning hatreds which were now "bringing forth deadly fruits." Northerners, said Clemens, seemed unwilling to save the Union, and Southerners could not take steps to save it without submitting to indignities and wrongs "so degrading as to be unacceptable."

Northern demands, declared Clemens, were clear: exclusion of Southerners from the territories, abolition in the Dis-

trict of Columbia and other federally controlled areas, prohibition of the interstate slave trade, and, ultimately, abolition in the states. Unless the South stood firm, he warned, the North would begin interfering with slavery in the states. Southerners should not make concessions, for no concession had ever yet "satisfied fanaticism," nor had the supplications of the sufferer. The South, therefore, should "meet the danger on the threshold, and fall or conquer there." Whatever the aggressor movement was called — abolition, free soil or free democracy — the result would be the same. For the South to yield an inch would be to endanger its safety. One triumph of abolition, he predicted, would lead to another aggression. Agitators had already moved from a demand for the right of petition to an attack on the "horrors of slavery." In fact, some zealots believed that their chances of eternal salvation were endangered if they allowed slavery to continue on the continent.

Clemens reminded Senator Salmon P. Chase, who had said he was both a Democrat and an abolitionist, that Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Andrew Jackson had followed a "strict construction of the Constitution" and a strict abstinence from the exercise of any "doubtful power." There was, declared Clemens, no constitutional provision granting Congress the authority to legislate on the subject of slavery either in the territories or elsewhere. Even if Congress had the power, exercise of it would be "unjust and iniquitous." Since the treasure and blood from all parts of the country had been used to acquire territories, no sectional group had an exclusive right to occupy them. Southerners had shared in common dangers, common sufferings, and common triumphs; the South was now entitled to "equal participation" in the gains that had resulted from the Mexican War. In the past, he noted, the South had yielded to encroachments: in agreeing to the Northwest Ordinance, in agreeing to the Missouri Compromise, and in allowing Oregon to be organized without slavery. In these cases, Southerners had submitted to robberies "with a patience of Job." Now, since Northerners demanded all the Mexican cession and part of Texas, a new spirit was required in the South.

Clemens rebuked those who answered the cry of the South for justice with the admonition of "Union." To him, the Union

was valuable "only for the privileges" it conferred and the rights it secured. Since the national government was being administered in such a way as to oppress one section, it had ceased to be an "object of veneration" to him, and he was ready to "rend asunder its firmest bonds." If others wanted Southerners to remain loyal to the Union, he warned, they should deal with them "justly and fairly." Unless they did so, it was idle to speak of the "glories of the Union." Reverence for Union should not be expected of anyone if the Union only meant continued insults sanctioned by the majority and wrongs legalized by that group. Despite the existing situation, however, Clemens said he preferred the Union and pleaded, "Restore the constitution which has been so mournfully disfigured, and I will follow its banner through every peril humanity can face."

Clemens then recited a list of specific grounds for complaint against Northerners. They had, he said, established clubs for dissemination of literature making foul libels on southern citizens and appealing to the worst passions of slaves, including suggestions of murder, burning, and rape. They had formed combinations to steal and spirit away southern property and had passed law after law to hinder and defraud Southerners when they sought to regain their property. They had hired lecturers to inflame the public mind against Southerners. Northern courts of justice had become "violent instruments of oppression," and riot and murder were freely resorted to. Even northern pulpits had become "sanctuaries of slander" which echoed and reechoed with "vile and base denunciations" of the southern people and their institutions. Such circumstances, Clemens charged, could not have developed merely because of agitation by a few fanatics. Support for such activities in the North was much more general, almost universal. William H. Seward, he noted as an example, had recently been elected to the Senate from New York in spite of the fact that he had deliberately declared the Constitution to be in violation of the Divine Law and had openly avowed to tramp it under foot. With such clear evidence of unfriendly feelings toward them, Southerners should not be deceived.

To save the Union, Clemens warned, Northerners must pause and retrace their steps. They must respect the guarantees

of the Constitution and hold its promises sacred. Perhaps, he surmised, the time was already past for saving the Union, for Northerners had caused many of the strongest ties between the sections to be severed. Blame for disunion, if it came, should be reserved for Northerners because their unjust acts had created the existing crisis. Those who denounced Southerners as a group, he said, were reckless and, by their actions, demonstrated that they were utterly ignorant of all the courtesies of life. Even as the sun brought brightness in the daytime but was followed by the shadows of evening so had an early brightness in the United States been followed by shadows, shadows brought on by the spirit of abolition. Northern aggressions were forcing Southerners "to choose between chains and infamy on the one hand, or equality and independence on the other." He, for one, could not be lulled into a sense of security by "siren songs in favor of Union." However much he loved the Union, he loved the liberties of his native land far more. Regrettably, he concluded, two groups had brought the country to the existing crisis: a band of fanatics who (regardless of right, regardless of the Constitution) had continued a "wild and reckless warfare" on the institution of slavery and a "timid, hesitating, shrinking" group in the South who were afraid to "march up to the line" and hurl back the oppressor at the very moment his footstep pressed "forbidden ground."<sup>9</sup> The editor of the Huntsville *Democrat* commended the speech and suggested that it expressed the "sentiments of an overwhelming majority of the people" of Alabama. Calling Clemens his "fiery favorite," the editor of the Columbia (South Carolina) *Telegraph* commended him for his deadly thrusts at "dirty demagogism" and for his zeal in defending the "rights and honor of the South."<sup>10</sup>

During debate in the Senate involving a petition calling for dissolution of the Union, Clemens (February 11, 1850) returned to his attack on northern agitators. Expressing gratification that Northern senators were now saying they could not assist in carrying out the intent of the petition, he reminded them that these views should be expressed in conduct as well as words. The South, he declared, had committed no aggress-

<sup>9</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 52-54.

<sup>10</sup>Huntsville, *Democrat*, January 24, 1850; Mobile, *Daily Herald and Tribune*, March 14, 1850.

sions. Southerners had only said they would resist aggression. To call such a stand disunionism was an "unmitigated calumny." Northerners, alone, were the agitators. If they wished to save the Union, they should cease their aggressions and pause in their efforts to destroy the Constitution. If they did so, there would be no need for talk of disunion. As for him, he had friends in both North and South and had commanded a New England regiment. Although "no man in the entire South" desired disunion for itself, Southerners were prepared to defend the Constitution "at all hazards." If this phenomenon could be called disunion, they were disunionists.<sup>11</sup>

In the meantime, Clemens had been active in debates concerning issues that were later to be incorporated into the Compromise of 1850. On December 4, 1849, President Taylor in his Annual Message to Congress had recommended the admissions of California as a state and had suggested that New Mexico statehood should be considered only after popular action in the territory. On December 27, 1849, Clemens presented resolutions requesting that Taylor supply the Senate with certain information related to California and New Mexico: whether he had appointed a civilian as military governor of California and, if so, who and what compensation he had been paid; whether any instructions or authority had been given to him "to organize a State government in the Territory or to aid and advise the people within its limits in such organization," how the California convention delegates had been elected and by whom the qualifications of voters had been determined, and whether steps had been taken to assemble a convention in New Mexico for the purpose of drawing up a constitution. Further, the resolutions called for Taylor to supply the Senate with all instructions to and all correspondence with agents sent to California and New Mexico.

Defending the resolutions, Clemens insisted that the President was not being asked to supply information beyond what the Senate had a right to see. Indeed, he said, Taylor should already have supplied the information. Alabamians, he pointed out, were concerned that fraud might have been practiced and that the recommended action of the President to admit Cali-

<sup>11</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 332-333.



fornia would accomplish the same result as the Wilmot Proviso. His resolutions, he said, had not been introduced for any "partisan purpose." "I make no war on him [President Taylor]," he declared, "save only when he makes war on the slavery question."<sup>12</sup>

On a later occasion, Clemens became involved in a dispute with northern Democrats who had worked to delay passage of his resolutions. They wanted, he charged, to "shield the President" from investigation because the slavery issue was involved. Southerners, he said, had been laboring under the delusion that northern Democrats were their friends; but, considering recent events, "God deliver" him from such friends. Following a reprimand because of the nature of his language and his use of personalities, Clements conceded that not all northern Democrats were against the South; nevertheless, he pointed out that some northern legislatures had instructed their senators to support action which the state of Alabama had declared to be a cause for "dissolution of the Union." To him, Southerners could no longer rely on either party in the North because both were courting abolition voters and ignoring scattered friends of the South.<sup>13</sup> Back home in Alabama, some newspapers expressed approval of his strong language, but others suggested that he had gone too far in attacking fellow Democrats.<sup>14</sup>

On February 20, 1850, after Henry Clay had presented a series of compromise proposals, Clemens made a long speech denouncing the Clay scheme. Regrettably, said he, Clay had suggested no remedy which did not recognize the "right of aggression on the one side" and demand "unconditional surrender on the other." Like most compromises between the weak and the strong, the plan was "little better than a cloak to hide from the public gaze a hideous wrong." Long ago, Clemens declared, Clay had chosen to become an "advocate of a system" designed to "build up and enrich the commercial and manufacturing interests at the expense of agriculture," probably honestly believing that he was laboring for the good of the entire nation. Under a similar delusion, Clay had now offered a plan which

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 87-110

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 182-184.

<sup>14</sup>Huntsville, *Democrat*, February 14, 1850; Tuskegee, *Macon Republican*, February 7, 1850.

disregarded the interests of one section and gave full recognition to those of the other, which conceded everything demanded by the North and proposed almost nothing to the South.

Clemens expressed particular concern about Clay's first resolution proposing that California be admitted as a state without any guarantees concerning slavery. Although California had already adopted a constitution forbidding slavery, he questioned whether it had the right to adopt a constitution at all. According to good authority, he argued, a law authorizing the formation of a state was "an essential prerequisite" to its admission to the Union. In the case of California, no such law had been passed. The convention there had acted on the mandate of the President, not the action of Congress. California, therefore, was a "corrupt child of military usurpation." Since no territorial government had ever been established in California, the people who formed the constitution were not inhabitants in the legal meaning of the word. Many, indeed, were Mexicans, Indians, and wild adventurers who had come out of greed for gold and of whom four-fifths would not settle permanently in California. This mixed group, he complained, "of every language and of every hue," some not even citizens of the United States, had undertaken, without authorization, to erect a state out of the public domain and were now being supported for statehood.

Clemens then pointed to precedents involving admission of other states and called attention to discrepancies in the case of California. In 1796, he noted, Tennessee had been denied immediate admission when Tennesseans had attempted to bypass the state-making process. Michigan had also been denied admission for a long period because of a boundary problem. In both cases, boundaries had been established and a census taken prior to admission. Prospective states did not, he said, have to go through any definite period of "territorial pupilage"; but supporters of each must demonstrate that boundaries had been defined and that, within those boundaries, a number of free inhabitants resided at least equal to the current ratio of representation. Such steps had not been completed in the case of California. If people of that area were permitted to fix boundaries and adopt a constitution without any enumeration of inhabitants, any future group of adventurers could get together in

any of the territories of the United States, hold a convention, and erect themselves into a state. In the case of California, without a census, an agreement about boundaries, or laws relating to the qualifications of voters or the holding of elections, a military governor had usurped the power of Congress, substituted his will for law, and "conducted to its final consummation a drama of fraud and trickery unparalled in the annals of any land." In other times, he suggested, the actors of such "lawless scenes" would have been repudiated; but now Congress was gravely debating the purchase of "temporary quiet" by "unmanly acquiescence," temporary because the admission of California would do nothing to arrest "the current of abolition aggression."

Northern victory on the California issue, declared Clemens, would be regarded as an "anti-slavery triumph." If it agreed to admission of California, the South would concede everything, and the North would get all she had asked for by action of Congress and in violation of the great legal principle that the wrongdoer should not profit from his own wrong. Agitation in northern state legislatures and in Congress had discouraged southern immigration from the beginning. Slaveholders could not afford to carry their property into an area with a threat hanging over the insitution of slavery. They had been excluded from California by fear just as effectively as they would have been by law. To him, direct enactment of the Wilmot Proviso would be preferable to admission of California because such action would be bolder, plainer, and more manly. As it was, an attempt was being made to smuggle a free state into the Union. Any opposition to admission, nevertheless, would likely be attributed to faction, for it was the fashion so to denounce Southerners who spoke out on behalf of their section. He, for example, had been described in New England as a disunionist and a critic of everything northern in spite of the fact that he admired Northerners for such traits as energy, industry, and sagacity.

Clay, declared Clemens, was mistaken in thinking there had to be a compromise. The Constitution itself represented a compromise, and a compromise within a compromise was "unheard of." Southerners, he asserted, wanted no compromise. A bond had been executed earlier, and they were willing to abide by it. Rather than compromising away provision after provision of

the Constitution, it might be preferable to abrogate the document at once. Indeed, the document appeared already to be a nullity, powerless for protection and potent only in aiding northern aggressions. In the past, he noted, disputes had occurred, followed by compromises in which the minority gave up some of its rights. Later, when other arguments arose, the minority was called on again to give up part of what was left. Now, he felt, the South must stand on the Constitution. If a "reckless and unprincipled majority" chose to violate that instrument, there was a remedy, sharp and severe, but just and inevitable.

Both Henry Clay and Lewis Cass, said Clemens, had envisioned a "bloody" and disastrous picture of disunion" and had predicted that war would follow on the heels of disunion. Clemens did not agree that war would follow, but, if it did, the responsibility must attach to those in whom "the dictates of justice had been silenced by the robber's instinct." The power to prevent disunion was no longer in the hands of Southerners but in the hands of the northern majority. Bloody pictures, he warned, would not frighten Southerners, for they were prepared to defend their rights.<sup>15</sup>

After Clay asserted that a legal census had been taken in California, Clemens reiterated that he would deny admission because of frauds that had been committed. Agitators throughout the North, he declared, had prevented Southerners from going to California and having a share in determining the content of its constitution. In the same speech, he chided Lewis Cass for giving one interpretation of popular sovereignty when he was seeking the presidency in 1848 and another in 1850. In 1848, Cass had said it meant that the people of a territory could decide the question of slavery for themselves when population was sufficient to form a state. Now, however, he proposed to admit California and, ultimately, exclude slavery from all the territories even though the population had not been officially determined. Although Cass would not openly say that the Wilmot Proviso was constitutional, Clemens said, application of his current views would result in the same outcome.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 395-398.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 401.

On February 25, 1850, during debate concerning creation of a Committee of Thirteen, Clemens pleaded for haste because he saw the ligaments binding the Union together "loosening every day." If debates continued for three weeks longer, he felt, it would no longer be "in the power of man to save the Union." A solution, therefore, must be evolved that would satisfy both the Senate and the people. Later he voted for the submission of compromise proposals to the select committee.<sup>17</sup>

After Clay reported a compromise package from the Committee of Thirteen (May 8, 1850), Clemens quickly announced that he could not support the proposed plan nor silently imply his sanction to it. The committee's main proposal (the Omnibus Bill) called for California statehood, territorial status for New Mexico and Utah, and adjustment of the Texas boundary in exchange for a monetary consideration. Two separate measures called for a fugitive slave law and for limiting the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Clemens said that he had voted for creation of the committee but that he did not approve of the proposals it had devised. "I am not here," he asserted, "to compromise away the provisions of the Constitution." Asking for no special concessions, he pleaded for only what the "letter of the supreme law" called for. He could not, he declared, agree with the committee assumption that there was a compelling necessity for admitting California and that California had a sufficient population to justify statehood. Members of the army and gold diggers might be people, but not necessarily legal inhabitants. Regrettably, component provisions in the compromise scheme were "old, familiar acquaintances."<sup>18</sup>

In a subsequent lengthy speech, Clemens reiterated that it would be "wholly impossible" for the compromise proposal to pass without significant amendments. He favored, for example, an amendment protecting the right of property in territories. In his view, squatters on the public land had no "inherent right" to form a government for themselves. He could not, moreover, agree with the contention of some that the President had acted correctly in authorizing California to draw

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 420-421, 774.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 947-948, 950-952; Hamilton Holman, Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1964, *Prologue to Conflict, the Crisis and Compromise of 1850*, 95.



up a constitution or who maintained that the admission of California did not involve a wrong for which the South had a right to complain. He was particularly disturbed that extraordinary efforts were being made to "manufacture public sentiment" in favor of the Compromise and to denounce those who considered the scheme delusive and dangerous and exposed its deformities. Motives of the latter group were being questioned, he felt, because they had called the proposal "a shameless surrender — not a compromise." Some politicians, Clemens charged, valued a national reputation so much that they were willing to compromise their views to keep one. As for himself, he valued a national reputation "very lightly." To have one, he would "only have to turn traitor" to his convictions and "abandon the interests of the South."

Acceptance of California as a state and adoption of the other proposed territorial adjustments, said Clemens, would be worse than adoption of the Wilmot Proviso and could not be sanctioned by the South without "a total abandonment of all claim to equal rights under the Constitution." Alluding to the proposal to take away part of Texas, Clemens asserted, "I prefer that California should come in singly to coupling her admission with a surrender of ten degrees of slave territory for the formation of free states." He could not, he declared, support legislation forbidding the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Regardless of what others said in defense of the compromise plan or about the dangers of not adopting it, he was convinced that the proposal represented the worst possible solution to the problems before the Senate. The North, he urged, must offer concessions. When made by the strong, concessions could be considered generosity; but, when they were made by the weak, they could only be thought of in terms of "slavish fear." To those who said the Compromise should be adopted because it was the best the South could get, he asked, "has it come to this, that an American senator is to ask himself, not whether a measure is unjust, iniquitous, and oppressive, but whether *it is the best he can do?*" As for him, if he had to consider the degree of oppression rather than the fact of it, he would feel that degradation had reached its "lowest deep."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>*Congressional Globe (Appendix), Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 585-589.*

After Henry S. Foote of Mississippi charged that Clemens had engaged in self-repetition from an old "harangue of his" and suggested that he favored amendments to the Constitution likely to be proposed by the forthcoming Nashville Convention, Clemens denied that he supported such amendments. He had, he exclaimed, "expressly denied any purpose of seeking an amendment to the Constitution" and preferred the direct attack of abolitionists who proposed to enslave the South by covert means built into the Compromise. Admitting that he had earlier attacked northern Democrats, he pointed out that he had not continued the attack after he had been interrupted. The Compromise before the Senate, he declared, was not a "northern compromise," for no Northerners had recommended one. It was Foote's compromise; for, without his exertions, the Committee of Thirteen would not have been formed. Since Foote and Clay had taken a lead in developing the scheme, and since a majority of the select committee had come from the South, the Compromise "came from the South." Foote, he alleged, had joined Northerners to promote the doctrine that a handful of squatters had the inherent right to establish a state government.<sup>20</sup>

Subsequently, Clemens proposed an amendment to the Omnibus Bill to eliminate the proposed Texas boundary and insert a provision that the Texas boundary be "confirmed and acknowledged" as settled by the law of limits passed by the Texas Congress in 1836 and that sovereignty over the entire territory within that boundary "be reserved absolutely for the State of Texas." Partly because of the opposition of Henry Clay, who maintained that the amendment would virtually place New Mexico under the dominion of Texas, the amendment was defeated.<sup>21</sup>

On July 31, 1850, opponents of the Omnibus Bill set out to destroy it by stripping it of its various provisions. During the debates, Clemens moved for indefinite postponement, pointing out that he had been sick for "some time past" and was anxious to adjourn; however, his motion was defeated. Eventually, the bill was divested of all of its provisions except for the

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 592-593.

<sup>21</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 1154-1165.

part authorizing organization of the territory of Utah. On the next day, the shortened bill was passed by a voice vote under the title "A Bill for Providing Territorial Government for Utah." Although his vote was not recorded, Clemens later said that he had supported it.<sup>22</sup>

In later debate concerning adjustment of the Texas boundary and payment of ten million dollars for the land to be taken, Clemens endorsed broad Texas claims and opposed intervention against that state by the national government. Disagreeing with the doctrine held by some that force could be used against a state, Clemens argued that the United States government could put down insurrections, i. e., compel individuals to submit, but that it could not use force against a state itself. To those who had asked why the Texas problem should be settled before that of California, he answered that there was no danger of collision in California. To those who had argued that ten million dollars was too much to pay Texas, he explained that Texas had contracted a large debt during her fight for independence. Now that the United States was profiting from the fruits of that rebellion, she should compensate Texas for territory that was to be taken away from her. To those who had said that the acquisition of Texas had brought dissension, Clemens suggested that dissention would have developed even if Texas had not been annexed, for critics of the South would have found something else to attack. "Bad men at the North," he exclaimed, had caused dissention; whatever the issues, they "would have been operated on by bad motives." Despite reservations and possible charges of inconsistency, Clemens ultimately supported final passage of the Texas Bill.<sup>23</sup>

Speaking near the close of debate on the California Bill, Clemens repeated some of his earlier arguments against admission, a mere protest, he said, because the bill would be passed anyhow. He opposed adoption because no valid census had ever been taken in California, because no lawful territorial government had ever been established there, because no boundaries had ever been established by Congress, because the con-

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 1491, 1504; Appendix, 1480-1485.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 1555, 1569-1570.

stitutional convention had resulted from executive usurpation, and because the constitutional provision against slavery excluded residents of one-half of the state from the area. His earlier questions about California, he declared, had never been answered. Instead, arguments had been advanced that any deficiencies should be overlooked because unusual circumstances had been involved. But northern congressmen had been responsible for the absence of territorial government in California. They had permitted special interests in that section to block a territorial bill. Now, the same interests were insisting that California be accepted as a state in spite of irregularities and asking Southerners to make most of the concessions. Whatever advocates of statehood might say, he declared, California had not inherited the right to establish a state government simply because Congress failed to provide territorial status. The right of a group squatters to erect a state could not be "too strongly reprobated."

Clemens said that he could not predict the reaction of Alabamians to admission of California, but, whatever the reaction, he would support Alabama even if she resisted the act by force or seceded. If a state chose to secede, he added, the President had no right to use military force for coercion. If one state were coerced, moreover, other states would come to its aid. Since his own first allegiance was to his state, it would not be treason for him to support it. In voting against California statehood, Clemens exercised his final protest.<sup>24</sup> He failed, however, to sign a protest document formulated by southern extremists and subsequently was attacked for failing to do so.

Because of illness, Clemens was absent for most of the remainder of the session and left Washington before Congress adjourned. He did not vote on the New Mexico Bill when it was passed on August 15 nor on the Fugitive Slave Bill when it was adopted on August 24. He was, however, paired with John P. Hale on the Fugitive Slave Bill. He had already left for Alabama by the time action was taken on the bill calling for abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 1534-1535, 1573.

<sup>25</sup>Mobile, *Daily Advertiser*, August 29, 1850; Washington, *Daily Union*, September 4, 1850.

Early in September, Clemens returned briefly to the Senate and presented resolutions from an Alabama group urging use of the 36°30' line for disposition of western territory and denouncing the settlement made regarding Texas. In a brief speech, he said that he did not believe the resolutions represented the views of more than one-tenth of the people of Alabama. In case of a "clear invasion of southern rights," he added, the people of Alabama would always be prepared to resist, but they were "not prepared to light the flames of civil war" because a proposition had been made to allow Texas "to settle a question of disputed boundary by mutual agreement."<sup>26</sup>

During the summer of 1850, public opinion in Alabama began to polarize about the compromise measures and Clemens came under attack for "selling out a portion of Texas to make free soil" because an abolition President had "*drawn the sword and menaced violence.*" In a letter dated August 20, 1850, Clemens answered that no part of Texas had been sold for any purpose. Nothing more had been done than to submit to Texas a plan permitting settlement of a difficult boundary question and allowing Texans to accept or reject the offer. In voting for the boundary bill, he had supported the right of Texans to make their own decision. The right of Texas to the disputed territory, moreover, had never been clear. Indeed, only eighteen senators had voted to accept her most extensive claims. Texas, he surmised, might not have lost any territory to which she had a valid claim. The Compromise, he added, had opened New Mexico to slavery by clearing the territory of Mexican law. Since most residents of New Mexico would settle on the east bank of the Rio Grande, the area would likely come into the Union as a slave state.<sup>27</sup>

Back in Alabama, Clemens found himself a center of controversy. Critics alleged that he had reversed himself in supporting some elements of the Compromise and that he had become a Submissionist. Partly because of his conviction that the Compromise was the best alternative available and partly no doubt because he realized that most people in North Alabama preferred compromise to further talk of disunion, Clemens

<sup>26</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, First Session, 1589, 1647, 1728, 1830.

<sup>27</sup>Clemens to \_\_\_\_\_, August 20, 1850, printed in Washington, *Daily Union*, September 4, 1850.



took the position of defending the Compromise, even to the extent of supporting measures he had earlier opposed. In a letter written after his return to Alabama in September, 1850, he answered charges made against him because of his vote on the Texas boundary bill, his failure to sign the protest offered by ten senators against the California bill, his failure to support the Alabama resolutions, and his alleged inconsistency. Answering the first criticism, Clemens said that the South actually had gained by the Texas boundary arrangement, for every foot given to New Mexico had already been included within her limits. Citing authorities to support his contention, he demonstrated that the original Texas claims had been exaggerated. New Mexico, he said, had always claimed the territory ceded, and Texas had never asserted control over it. Except for a few miles on each side of the Rio Grande, moreover, the area involved was uninhabitable. If it had been left to Texas, it would not have brought much wealth and strength to that state. Nothing dishonorable, he argued, had been involved in the transaction. Precedents existed in the case of Maine and Oregon where claims to territory had been compromised in order to settle difficult questions. Answering the second charge that he had not signed the protest, Clemens pointed out that he had made his own protest against the admission of California on the day before the protest was circulated and that the document had been circulated early in the day before he reached the floor of the Senate. In answer to the third charge, Clemens asserted that, when presenting the Alabama resolutions, he had simply said that they did not reflect truly the thinking of the people of Alabama and suggested that his judgment had not been disproved. Persons who had drawn up the resolutions, he said, had acted for themselves and had asked him to present them as if they represented general opinion in Alabama. Under the circumstances, he did not consider his remarks extraordinary; he had not misrepresented the people of Alabama. As to the charge of inconsistency on the Texas question, Clemens pointed out that the final Texas boundary arrangement was much more generous to Texas than an earlier one which he had opposed. From the beginning, he said, he would have been willing to vote for the settlement finally agreed upon. He lamented the readiness of some to condemn, to use such words as "Ultra," "Factionist," "Disunionist," and "Traitor." A little more respect for opinions

of those who differed, a little more forbearance, and a little more kindness, he felt, were needed.<sup>28</sup>

After trying for several weeks to avoid controversy surrounding the compromise measures, Clemens made a lengthy speech at Huntsville on November 4, 1850, in which he explained his views concerning the various issues involved. Attendance at the meeting was so large that it had to be moved from the courtroom to the open air. According to one observer, interest was high because many did not know whether Clemens was a Rhettite or a conservative.<sup>29</sup> Early in the speech, however, Clemens demonstrated that he did not support the extreme state rights views of Robert Barnwell Rhett by attacking the political element in Alabama which claimed that "secession was a thing good in itself . . . a *positive blessing*." Since such doctrines were being promulgated, he declared, answers must be given by those who held other views. In his own case, he admitted, he had at one time made violent speeches and used harsh language. Then, such an approach might have done some good; now, however, a different situation existed. After a bitter contest, a settlement had been reached, and good men everywhere sought repose.

Clemens then reviewed the consequences of the compromise measures that had received the greatest criticism. The South, he noted, had lost the whole of California, with its valuable mineral wealth and rich Pacific trade, despite the fact that no precedent existed to justify admission under similar circumstances. The most violent secessionist, said he, could not go further than he would in denouncing the injustice of the act. The South, however, must assume part of the blame for what had occurred, for a southern President had devised the plan, and some Southerners had supported it. Regardless of past circumstances, the remedy was not secession. Alabama, he pointed out, could not be assured that other states would join her in such a step because many southern votes had been cast in support of the admission of California. In regard to

<sup>28</sup>Clemens to Editors of the *Democrat*, September 16, 1850, printed in Tuskegee, *Macon Republican*, October 10, 1850.

<sup>29</sup>Mobile, *Daily Advertiser*, November 16, 20, 1850; Tuskegee, *Macon Republican*, November 21, 1850; Huntsville, *Democrat*, November 21, 1850; Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, November 12, 1850.

the measure calling for the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, Clemens said that he agreed with those who complained about it. He cared not whether slaves were sold in the District or not, but he opposed congressional meddling on the subject. If Congress could abolish the slave trade, it could abolish slavery in the District. In forbidding the slave trade, it has committed a serious aggression which every strict constructionist should "strongly condemn"; nevertheless, the aggression did not justify "resistance by secession and civil war." Clemens again denied that a portion of Texas had been taken away to gratify northern fanaticism. Some who spoke of wrongs and defended principles, he surmised, had not studied to learn all the facts related to the Texas question. Indeed, the Texas claim to some of the disputed area was doubtful, so doubtful, in fact, that Texans had declined to submit their claim to the Supreme Court. Although he conceded that he had once supported the claim of Texas to the entire area in question, he insisted that he had done so because he wanted the weaker party to have the benefit of the doubt and because he did not want to concede all at the beginning. He deplored the willingness of a minority faction to assume that it alone had the privilege to determine what was right and then charge that the majority had been faithless to southern interests.

Clemens then discussed what he called the "healing" measures — measures of conciliation and peace. A territorial government, he noted, had been authorized for Utah, north of the 36°30' line and without the restrictions imposed by the Wilmot Proviso. Since the Mormon religion tolerated slavery and since a constitution had been drawn up which did not outlaw the institution, there was reason to believe that Utah might become a slave state. Similarly, he said, life, liberty, and property were protected in New Mexico, part of which lay north of 36°30'. If slavery were not established there, God and nature would be responsible, not the law. The Fugitive Slave Law, he added, had been passed "at the instance of the South." Although a few "crazy fanatics" were opposing it, the law, as a general rule, was being enforced; and sober and reflecting people of the North, he felt, would honor obligations imposed by the Constitution.

If the Compromise were honored and no serious effort

were made to repeal the component measures, Clemens said, Southerners should be "atisfied with the settlement" which had been adopted. Although they had not secured all objects they had sought, they had been granted more concessions than any minority had ever been given before. The majority, for example, had abandoned the Wilmot Proviso and had guaranteed the people of the territories the right to regulate the question of slavery for themselves. In light of the gains that had been made, he hoped that Alabamians would not join in any agitation for secession.

Deploring the idea of disunion, Clemens declared, "We have a deep stake in the preservation of the Union, and that must, indeed, be a serious grievance which can justify secession." Although he conceded that the word disunion had been used frequently a year earlier, he saw little reason to consider such a step at the present because there were now grounds for hope. Recommending acquiescence, he questioned whether any benefits could result from secession. Could, he asked, any losses be recovered? Slavery could not be imposed on California nor could the prospect of slavery in the territories be enhanced. There was, he argued, a need for understanding — not division. Despite problems in the past, good sense had triumphed. Currently, Alabama was enjoying unsurpassed prosperity. Peace and plenty prevailed. But continued progress depended on Union, and any change would be for the worse. Disunion could lead to a "banquet of blood," wasted fields, and smoking ruins.<sup>30</sup>

Following Clemens' speech, the southern rights supporters on the scene attempted to gain a hearing for their views but were largely unsuccessful. In evaluating Clemens' speech, one listener commented that he had "killed off" the nascent disunion feeling in the Huntsville area so that the "rickety" movement was now dead. Clemens, he wrote, had done a good day's work for his country, the Union, and posterity by saving many from being led astray into gross errors. As a matter of fact, the rank and file of people in Alabama apparently accepted the Compromise already as the best means for resolving North-South differences.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Huntsville, *Democrat*, November 21, 1850.

<sup>31</sup>Mobile, *Daily Advertiser*, November 16, 1850.



After returning to Washington, Clemens wrote a friend in early December expressing satisfaction that so many Alabamians had supported him and noting that a large number of the people of the state appeared to be opposed to "all further agitation." Despite talk of repeal or modification of the Fugitive Slave Law, he said, there was "*not the slightest danger to be apprehended.*" In his estimation, a majority in the House of Representatives were opposed to altering it, and members of the Senate were almost unanimously opposed to change. Although Vermont had passed foolish laws on the subject, these would be "simply ridiculous" except for the agitated state of the public mind. At the moment, he was not disturbed by events. If the time ever came, however, when the South had to defend her rights by the sword, he would be prepared to call brother those who denounced him as a submissionist. In January, he signed a pledge to support the Compromise and not to support candidates for office who were opposed to it. As one of the few Democrats to sign it, he subjected himself to additional abuse from the radical element in Alabama.<sup>32</sup>

Ill for a time at the beginning of the Second Session of the Thirty-first Congress, Clemens returned to the Senate in time to join in debates related to enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. Expressing a feeling of reluctance to engage in any discussion related to the issue of slavery, he pointed out that he had not been identified as a leading supporter of the Compromise in 1850 and that he had not been as confident of the "immediate healing results" of compromise as some had been. After the measures had been adopted, however, he had considered it his duty to give them "a fair and impartial trial." If they worked well, the quiet of the country would be restored; if not, other remedies could be attempted. Accordingly, he had earnestly sought to "quiet all agitation" in his own state and had staked his political fortunes on that result. The only measure subject to repeal, he believed, was the Fugitive Slave Law. If he thought it was about to become a dead letter, he would say at once that the time for "a dissolution of this Union" had come and that the American experiment in self-government was a failure. To Alabamians, the Fugitive Slave Law was valueless from a pecuniary standpoint, for few slaves were

<sup>32</sup>Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, December 23, 1850; Washington, *Daily National Intelligencer*, January 30, 1851.



ever lost. However, a principle was involved. If a plain provision of the Constitution could be nullified at will, there was no security that other provisions of the document would not meet a similar fate.

But, said Clemens, he felt that the law would be executed. In some northwestern states, he noted, fugitives had actually been arrested by citizens and returned to their owners. Some states, moreover, had passed laws excluding both fugitives and free blacks from their borders. All people in the Mississippi Valley, North and South, he suggested, had a common destiny. The law, he said, had been executed in such states as New York, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire. Only in Massachusetts had problems arisen. There, the law had been evaded, once openly set a naught. Exceptions, however, did not prove that the people of Massachusetts were determined to set themselves against the national government. Rescue by a mob could have taken place anywhere. Moreover, Boston had already begun an effort to insure that the law would be executed in the future. If any community attempted to prevent enforcement of a law, Clemens said, the national government had power to enforce its execution. President Fillmore, he noted with approval, had made known his determination to vindicate the law with force if necessary. Southerners were pleased that he had recognized his duty and had accepted the responsibility for carrying it out, and they expected him to be "equal to any future emergency."<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime, Alabama had experienced a party realignment in which Union Democrats had joined with Whigs to form a Union Party, which supported the Compromise of 1850 and opposed the idea of secession; and other elements had united to form a Southern Rights Party, which opposed "tame submission" to the compromise measures and approved the idea of secession or retaliation under certain circumstances. By early 1851, both groups were preparing for the coming summer election. North Alabama Democrats faced the problem of deciding whether to join the Whigs or to support unpalatable doctrines held by South Alabama Democrats who had joined the Southern Rights Party.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-First Congress, Second Session, 304-305.

<sup>34</sup>Lewy Dorman, Wetumpka, *Party Politics in Alabama from 1850 through 1860*, 1935, 49, hereafter cited as Dorman, *Party Politics*.

Because he was closer to the Unionists philosophically and because he needed their support if he expected to retain his Senate seat, Clemens identified himself with the Union cause and supported Unionist candidates. In early 1851, moreover, he had signed a pledge, mostly supported by Whigs, to oppose all men for public office who did not agree to stand behind the Compromise of 1850. As a consequence, the opposition press attacked Clemens as a submissionist, criticized him for his support of Fillmore and his inconsistency, and raised old charges about the alleged bargain he had made with the Whigs to secure election in 1849. Noting these attacks, the friendly *Southern Advocate* asserted that Clemens would survive despite the opposition barking at his heels and warned his critics that even if disunionists and political aspirants succeeded in defeating Clemens for the Senate, the Unionists would see that no Rhettite was elected in his place.<sup>35</sup>

Following his return to Alabama at the end of the short and rather uneventful Second Session of the Thirty-first Congress, Clemens made a series of speeches in Northwest Alabama, where, according to one observer, he helped kill the "doctrine of resistance and secession" as "dead as a mackrel." Speaking at Athens to a "respectable audience" for about an hour, he reviewed the compromise measures, noted that he had not agreed with all of them and advised Alabamians to acquiesce and to encourage Northerners to do likewise. They should, he warned, beware of those who spoke of "resistance" and called secession a "right."<sup>36</sup> At Tuscumbia, he again reviewed the Compromise, pointing out that Southerners had had a large part in securing its adoption. He had, he said, opposed the admission of California but believed the New Mexico and Utah territorial bills to be southern bills because they left the way open to the introduction of slavery. The Texas bill, he felt, was neither pro-southern nor pro-northern, and the Fugitive Slave Law was pro-southern. The latter law had been evaded in Massachusetts, but it was being enforced in other states. Although Clemens admitted the right of resistance to unconstitutional, unjust, and oppressive acts of the national government even to the last resort, revolution, he denied that states

<sup>35</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, March 26, April 9, May 7, 1851.

<sup>36</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, June 25, 1851; Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, July 4, 1851.

had the right to secede. There were, he said, three groups in the South: supporters of acquiescence, supporters of secession, and persons in between who spoke of resistance short of secession. Both of the latter groups, he warned, were attempting to raise people's emotions to a fever pitch. Although he had signed a pledge not to support any man who favors disturbing the Compromise, he insisted that he had not joined the Union Party and said that he was still a Democrat. Despite his disclaimer, however, the Huntsville *Democrat* charged that the Whig Party, under the banner of the Union Party, was trying to take over Alabama and that the "recreant" Clemens was working for them.<sup>37</sup>

Following later speeches at Center and Talladega in Northeast Alabama, Clemens went to the Montgomery District in early July, 1851, to assist in the congressional campaign of the Unionist, James Abercrombie. At Montgomery, he was received with "rapturous cheers" by a partisan audience. He was, he told the appreciative throng, touring the state to dispose of slanders concocted about himself. Answering charges of inconsistency, Clemens conceded that he had once opposed much of what had been later included in the Compromise but pointed out that there was a great difference between opposing passage of a proposal and resisting or violating the measure after it had been passed. Citing Andrew Jackson, he declared that the Democratic party had always been the party of Union and that Jackson himself had opposed secession. Southerners, he noted, had had a major part in drawing up the compromise measures; the South, moreover, had not suffered as much oppression as some had alleged. As for himself, he was both a patriot and a Democrat.<sup>38</sup> Calling the speech, "trash, trash, trash," the Montgomery *Atlas* charged that Clemens had deserted the South's real interests, that he had given aid and comfort to the submissionists and abused the cause of Southern Rights.<sup>39</sup>

Subsequently, Clemens spoke at Troy, Tuskegee, and Blue Springs. At Troy, according to one report, he "planted himself firmly on the Georgia Platform." The issue before the

<sup>37</sup>Livingston, *Sumter County Whig*, July 8, 1851; Huntsville, *Democrat*, July 21, 1851.

<sup>38</sup>Montgomery, *Alabama Journal*, July 9, 14, 1851.

<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Huntsville, *Democrat*, July 24, 1851.

public, he declared, was union or disunion. If opposition candidates were elected, they would be "out and out secessionists." Although he had not approved all of the compromise measures, they had been adopted and he was prepared to support them so that the vexed questions in the country could be resolved.<sup>40</sup> At Tuskegee, Clemens expressed similar views and said that the South was in the best position it had occupied for thirty years.<sup>41</sup> At Blue Springs, he was presented with a statement charging that he had obtained election in 1849 by compromising his principles in promising to support the Taylor Administration in exchange for Whig votes and demanding that he lift the cloak of secrecy concerning the Whig caucus in 1849. Clemens quickly denied that he had made any pledges to the Whigs and authorized publication of any letters he had written. Rather hastily, he then returned to Huntsville, apparently to take steps to refute the charges that had been made.<sup>42</sup>

In response to the charges made at Blue Springs, Clemens authorized Thomas Wilson and James F. Frazier to publish a letter to them dated November 30, 1849, in which Clemens assured them, immediately after his election to the Senate, that he was under no special obligation to the Whigs. When rumors persisted that Clemens had written a letter in 1849 promising to support President Taylor, he called any such letter a forgery. Newspaper editors throughout the state accepted or rejected the claims of Clemens and his supporters according to their political views. The *Montgomery Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, for example, affirmed that Clemens had "repeatedly and publicly" stigmatized the charges as false and had defied "production of any pledge of his incompatible with his principles as a democrat." On the other hand, the *Huntsville Democrat* claimed that Clemens had made a pledge to the Whigs and now refused to take any person's recollection of what had happened. Clemens was now, charged the editor, supporting the Fillmore Administration and going about over the state speaking on behalf of the Unionist cause.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup>Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Journal*, July 30, 1851.

<sup>41</sup>Tuskegee, *Macon Republican*, July 17, 1851.

<sup>42</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, July 30, 1851; Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, July 23, 1851.

<sup>43</sup>Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Journal*, August 25, September 15, 1851; Huntsville, *Democrat*, August 28, 1851.



After his return from South Alabama in July, Clemens continued to make speeches in the Huntsville area. At Huntsville, he admitted again that he had joined Henry Clay in signing a pledge to support only those candidates who favored enforcement of the Compromise. In the North, he said, there was a "returning sense of justice and regard for the constitutional rights of the South." In no case should Alabama consider secession. At Meridianville, according to one report, he exposed the "schemes of the agitators" and advised citizens to "uphold the Union" as the ark of safety of the nation.<sup>44</sup> The hostile *Democrat* still insisted that Clemens had failed to prove his consistency, that (although he had spoken against agitation) he was the "prime mover" of agitation, and that he was culpable in calling those who disagreed with him agitators and disunionists. Clemens, concluded the *Democrat*, was a submissionist and a eulogist of a Whig President who opposed the principles of Jefferson and Jackson.<sup>45</sup>

The results of the August, 1851, election to the Alabama legislature seemed to bear out Clemens' view that Alabamians preferred to accept the Compromise and to assure his re-election to the Senate in the forthcoming session. Twenty-two Unionists were elected to the Senate as compared to 11 Southern Rights men, and 62 Unionists were elected to the House of Representatives as compared to 38 Southern Rights supporters. Despite the approximate two to one advantage enjoyed by the Unionists, however, many from the group were converted North Alabama Democrats who were subject to returning their allegiance to the Democratic Party once it could be reorganized.<sup>46</sup>

As the time for the election of a United States senator neared, the opposition press stepped up its abuse of Clemens. Following one especially violent attack on him in the *Mobile Tribune*, Clemens complained that falsehoods were involved and that he was being treated as a "personal enemy" rather than as a "political opponent." Even though he had assisted some of his attackers in obtaining office and still gave them assistance, they continued to heap abuse on him. With "cool

<sup>44</sup>Huntsville, *Democrat*, August 7, 1851; Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, August 20, 1851.

<sup>45</sup>July 31, 1851.

<sup>46</sup>Dorman, *Party Politics*, 54-55.



impudence," he declared, this wretched minority had assumed that it included all the "talents and decency" of the state. Excluding some from the secessionist group who would "do honor to any station," Clemens charged that it included a "vile leaven of envy, malice, meanness and cowardice which would damn any cause and drag down any party."<sup>47</sup>

When the editor of the Huntsville *Democrat* garbled a conversation between him and Clemens concerning a speech the latter had made at Bellefonte, Clemens responded with a long letter dated October 10. Criticizing first the publication of what had been said in a private conversation, he went on to describe his political course since 1849. In 1849, he wrote, members of both parties were familiar with his view that party lines should be minimized until North-South difficulties could be settled. At that time, he had agreed to support President Taylor only if his administration was a pro-southern one. No Whig had asked him to make any further concessions. When Taylor urged immediate statehood for California, moreover, Clemens noted, he had opposed the measure and had been applauded in Alabama by both parties. Presently, insisted Clemens, he he was a Democrat (had always been one) but a Union man also. He did not, he said, intend to "aid in the destruction of the Government" simply because some who wished to pull it down cloaked their designs under a popular name. Repudiating such Democracy as the secessionists advocated, he asserted that their views were not the same as those held by Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson. In light of the alternatives, he had supported Union Whigs instead of Disunion Democrats. Although he intended to support the National Democrats on old issues, he preferred to maintain the Union organization in Alabama at least until existing dangers had dissipated. After the Union was safe, he said, old controversies could safely be revived.

Turning to the subject of secession, Clemens said that he would exert every effort to prevent Alabama from attempting such a step but that he would go with her if she seceded. The real sin which had led his traducers to attack him, Clemens surmised, was not his promise to support a

<sup>47</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, September 24, 1851.

Whig President but his refusal "to take a seat at the council table of Disunion." After he refused to take the proffered seat, he had been subjected to "an amount of invective, abuse and systematical misrepresentation" without parallel in the history of Alabama. Even though the recent triumph of the Union cause had led to an increase in the malignity of the assaults being made on him, however, he had not sought to avoid "a single shaft from the quivers of secession."<sup>48</sup>

When the Alabama legislature met in November, 1851, it included a majority of men who had committed themselves to the Unionist cause at the time of the August election. As a consequence, Clemens' supporters were confident that he would be elected to the Senate and pushed for an early vote before divisions could be created. The Southern Rights strategy, on the other hand, called for delaying that election until the Democratic Party could be reorganized to their advantage or for postponing the election until the 1853 legislative session. Proponents of delay were able to win support of enough Unionists to secure postponement of the election and, ultimately, to prevent an election during the session. According to people on the scene, "disunionists" called Clemens a Federal Whig and begged their old friends to rejoin the Democratic Party and help reorganize it on the basis of old issues. Wavering Unionists could stretch their consciences and vote for delay in the senatorial election whereas they would have been dutybound to vote for Clemens if the election had been held. Clemens' supporters were disgusted by the inaction of the legislature and complained that a great wrong had been committed against him. Many had deserted Clemens, they said, even though he had helped secure their election. One editor summarized the general feeling when he wrote that "our gallant union Senator has been sacrificed," apparently by the "treason" of professed friends from his own area. A victory decidedly won in August had been lost because of their disloyalty. Clemens, he concluded, deserved a better fate and better friends.<sup>49</sup>

About this time, two letters were made public, one from

<sup>48</sup>Clemens to Editor of the *Democrat*, October 10, 1851, quoted in Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, October 22, 1851.

<sup>49</sup>Livingston, *Sumter County Whig*, November 25, December 2, 1851, January 20, 1852; Huntsville, *Democrat*, November 28, 1851; Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, November 22, 26, 29, 1851, January 12, February 11, 13, 1852.

Judge Jefferson Buford and one from Paul McCall, alleging that Clemens, at the Whig caucus in 1849, had pledged to support the administration of President Taylor if elected. Clemens answered the charge in a letter dated February 21, 1852, in which he suggested that Buford and McCall had been parties to a corrupt bargain (if one had been made), had remained silent for a time, and had later betrayed a confederate. But, as a matter of fact, he said, no bargain had been made, and there was nothing to betray. In his letter, asserted Clemens, Buford had undertaken to repeat the exact words of a letter he had seen only once. Although McCall had not seen the letter at all, he remembered the exact words Bufford had used. Both said Clemens, must have been honestly mistaken. Actually, the note seen at the Whig caucus was one Clemens had given to L.R. Davis authorizing Davis to state that Clemens, if elected, would not engage in "factionous party opposition" to the administration but would oppose Taylor if he fell under "free-soil influence." When he had opposed Taylor in 1849, noted Clemens, no two had sustained him more than had Buford and McCall. Numerous persons who had attended the Whig caucus, he explained, had confirmed that the recollections of McCall and Buford were faulty.<sup>50</sup> Subsequently, James Abercrombie confirmed that Clemens' explanation had been correct, that Clemens had authorized Davis to pledge that he would make "no captious opposition to the administration," but that he had made no promises that could not have been made by an honorable gentlemen. The Buford-McCall charges, therefore, represented an injustice to Clemens.<sup>51</sup> Ripley Davis also confirmed that he had had a note and that he had been authorized to state that Clemens would not engage in factionous opposition to Taylor.<sup>52</sup>

When Clemens was chosen as an elector-at-large by a Union convention held in Montgomery in January, 1852, William Fleming asked Clemens whether the action had been taken with his consent. In answer, Clemens wrote that he had heard of no plan to elect him prior to the actual convention and went on to describe his position as regarded party matters.

<sup>50</sup>Jeremiah Clemens to J.J. Seibels, February 21, 1852, quoted in Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, March 2, 1852.

<sup>51</sup>James Abercrombie to John C. Stephenson, April 29, 1852, Montgomery *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, May 28, 1852.

<sup>52</sup>Montgomery, *Daily Alabama Journal*, March 22, 1852.

Whether he accepted the Unionist nomination, he said, would depend on future circumstances. Since he had not seen the resolutions adopted by the Union committee and since he had not heard what course the Democrats planned to follow, he did not know what direction Union men should take. Certainly, he declared, Alabamians should act in concert with Georgia and Mississippi; for if these three states were united, they could control the coming presidential election and be able to secure any just demand they proposed without war, bloodshed, or disunion. No party, he felt, would dare nominate a presidential candidate knowing that the votes of the three states would be cast against him. If southern wishes were scorned by major parties, however, Clemens said that he would accept the Union nomination for elector and support the Union cause. In case other contingencies arose, he would act otherwise. If, for example, Lewis Cass or another Democrat untarnished by free soil influences became the Democratic candidate, he would support him and, he hoped, so would all Union Whigs unless their party presented an equally acceptable candidate. Under no circumstances would he support a candidate who owed his nomination to either free-soil or secession influences.

Clemens then attacked actions taken by the recent "so-called democratic convention" in Alabama and chided his old friend Fleming for being part of it. As an old Jacksonian, asserted Clemens, Fleming had been keeping strange company. Oddly, he said, the convention had failed to mention Andrew Jackson's name in its resolutions and had not endorsed his views. Furthermore, it has selected mostly secessionists as delegates to the Democratic convention and as electors. These men were advocates of the right of secession, a view that Clemens and Fleming had not formerly held. The convention had been originated under "secession auspices," said Clemens, and its attendance had mostly consisted of State Rights Whigs and secession Democrats. True Democrats and friends of the Union, he declared, had been a "lean minority" and had given no color to the convention. Its fruits were what could have been expected.

Allegedly, said Clemens, the Democratic Party had been reorganized; but, to him, it had never been disorganized.



Rather, a few restless spirits had set up false gods and had tried to force others to worship them; the August election of 1851, however, had demonstrated the weakness of their position. After a severe defeat in the election, the disunion group began lamenting about the disorganized state of the party and seeking to draw Union men into a reorganization plan. After this reorganization, control of the party passed to the secessionists. Actions of the recent convention certainly did not reflect the public will. Fleming, said Clemens, had no right to pledge Madison County to support the position of the convention, for not more than one-fifth of the people there held views advocated by the convention. Although Union men in attendance at the convention had probably acted from worthy motives, they had helped give strength to a "desperate faction" and "warmed a viper" in their bosoms. A few Union men had been placed in positions of apparent influence in the reorganized party, but the other faction was in real control. If that faction remained in control and if Fleming continued to support them, Clemens warned, he and Fleming would have to part. For himself, there could be no reconciliation with the State Rights group; earlier, he had helped defeat their "treasonable schemes" and had developed such strong feelings against them that he could not consider "even the semblance of a truce."<sup>53</sup>

When the Washington *Daily Union* criticized Clemens for stressing old divisions in Alabama in terms that might increase party division, Clemens cited an Alabama newspaper attacking him, Foote of Mississippi, and Cobb of Georgia and suggested that it was impossible to aggravate further "the bitter and unrelenting hostility" being displayed toward friends of the Compromise. The Southern Rights Democrats, he declared, had openly vowed to eject him and the other two men from the Democratic Party because they had refused to follow a treasonable course. Even the editor of the *Union*, he pointed out, had been attacked for trying to preserve the Union. "You cannot," he asserted, "change the nature of the serpent. You must crush it or draw out its fangs."<sup>54</sup> Some Alabama newspapers seconded Clemens' charges and agreed that the Democrats in

<sup>53</sup>Jeremiah Clemens to William Fleming, January 28, 1852, Washington, *Daily Union*, January 31, 1852.

<sup>54</sup>Jeremiah Clemens to A. J. Donelson, January 31, 1852, Washington, *Daily Union*, February 3, 1852.



Alabama had, in effect, repudiated Jackson and his doctrines and that the leaders of the reorganized party were the "most notorious advocates of secession and disunion" in the state. Unionists, moreover, had been inconsistent in joining with the secessionists simply to defeat the Whigs.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, Clemens had become involved in a running battle in the Senate with Robert Barnwell Rhett, recently senator from South Carolina and leader of the Southern Rights faction. The war of words began in December, 1851, during debate over a resolution declaring the compromise measures to be a "definitive settlement of the questions growing out of domestic slavery" which should be adhered to by Congress until time and experience demonstrated "the necessity of further legislation to guard against evasion or abuse." In a speech critical of the resolution, Rhett spoke favorably of such terms as "disunion" and "secession" and received approving looks from such free-soil men as Salmon P. Chase, William H. Seward, Charles Sumner, and John P. Hale. In a speech that followed Rhett's, Clemens expressed astonishment concerning Rhett's views but even greater astonishment concerning the apparent approval demonstrated by Chase, Seward, Sumner, and Hale. Strangely, he said, abolitionists had applauded and encouraged a speech by an extreme southern senator denouncing the national government and calling himself a disunionist. There must be, he suggested, "a sympathy in treason as well as in knavery." In using such language, Clemens may have been seeking to provoke Rhett to challenge him to a duel.

Defending the resolution, Clemens said that adoption of the measure would give assurance to the country that Congress intended to "put an end to agitation" and remove a weapon from the hands of demagogues. Free soilers in the North, he charged, were currently proclaiming that there was no obligation to abide by the compromise agreement because Southerners were determined to destroy it. At the same time, southern secessionists were telling Southerners that the Compromise was a nullity because of northern actions in defiance of it. Under the circumstances, adoption of the resolution would be a victory for friends of law and order. Resistance to pas-

<sup>55</sup>Mobile, *Daily Advertiser*, February 12, 1852.

sage of the compromise measures had been one matter, he said, but resistance to the law was a totally different one.

Clemens then summarized the evolution of the compromise measures. The admission of California, he asserted, was not solely an act of northern aggression. After all, President James Knox Polk had first explored the possibility of admitting it as a free state, and eight of the 15 southern states had furnished votes for admission, including a majority of those from Tennessee and Kentucky. Despite irregularities concerning the California constitution, he said, Congress had voted to admit the state, an action legal within the meaning of the Constitution. As to Utah, both North and South had assented to the Utah Bill, a bill which had been framed to "suit the taste" of southern men and to obviate "every reasonable" southern objection. Even the "Pillars of the Southern Rights Church" had supported it. Under its provisions, he pointed out, Southerners were free to take their slave property into the Utah Territory. For the first time, he declared, Northerners had agreed in advance to leave the question of slavery to local settlers and had allowed repeal of Mexican law forbidding slavery. To him, it was sufficient that there was no exclusion of Southerners, no insult to southern feelings. Despite arguments to the contrary, he said, the Texas boundary settlement had been a southern measure, passed with southern help and ratified by Texas. Texas, moreover, had never had a legal claim to the disputed area. Although the Fugitive Slave Law was being evaded in some places, even violently, some violations of any law were to be expected. In no way was the law a dead letter, Clemens said, for it was being enforced on a wide scale.

Approval of the resolution, stated Clemens, did not require approval of the Compromise. It was simply a public declaration of willingness to submit to the law. Anyone who wished to see agitation cease, therefore, could conscientiously vote for it. In casting such a vote, he would not have to retract earlier views or to praise measures he had voted against. Only the Fugitive Slave Law and the measure related to the slave trade in the District of Columbia, he felt, were still open to agitation. Even though he personally believed Congress had no right to meddle with slavery in the District of Columbia, he would not

seek repeal of the slave trade provision, for it had been adopted as part of a series of agreements to resolve North-South differences.

Turning to a discussion of Rhett's views about secession, Clemens said that Rhett had tried to prove that each state had a separate right to peaceable secession. Why, mused Clemens, had Rhett dwelled upon the idea with such exultation? To Clemens, the right of secession was the right to self destruction. Some, he suspected, had given too loose an interpretation to the concept of state sovereignty and thought of sovereign states as if sovereignty were "absolute and unquestioned." Under the Constitution, however, states could not be sovereign in an absolute sense. The national government, Clemens pointed out, exercised certain exclusive powers, and a specific provision of the Constitution declared that document to be the supreme law of the land. The states were, therefore, "sovereign for some purposes but for those purposes only." The doctrine of peaceable secession, he declared, was "as wild a vision as as ever haunted the brain of a moonstruck politician." The framers of the Constitution had not created a rope of sand with seeds of its own destruction included in the document. As for himself, Clemens said, he could support revolution in answer to oppression, but he could not support the concept of peaceable secession advocated by the fire eaters.

Even if the right of secession existed, suggested Clemens, there was no current issue justifying such a step. No individual could specify a "single essential right" anyone had been deprived of. Agitators, nevertheless, called for secession at the risk of war and destruction. Any disunion effort, warned Clemens, would produce desolation. In his speech, Rhett had invited Southerners to a "banquet of blood." Instead of secession, said Clemens, support of the Compromise was necessary in order to promote healing. After the human mind had been agitated by angry discussions, time was required to dispel "prejudices and remove animosities" just as time was required to bring calm to the sea after a storm. Only a few months ago, he noted, many had looked to the future with "dread and apprehension," but they now looked forward to the future with optimism. Within a short time, he predicted, feelings of doubt and terror would be replaced by those of hope and

joy.<sup>56</sup>

For more than a year, hard feelings had been building up between Clemens and Rhett because of Clemens' leadership of the Unionist movement in Alabama and Rhett's leadership of the Southern Rights Movement. Earlier differences plus the Clemens attack on Rhett provoked Rhett to make an emotional attack on him in a speech delivered after a delay of several weeks. Explaining that he had been at home in South Carolina most of the time since the Clemens' speech, Rhett called attention to the part of it in which Clemens had accused him of being friendly to Sumner, Chase, Hale, and Seward and denied the truth of the charge. Any charge of sympathy between him and northern free soilers about slavery, said he, was baseless. Indeed, he declared, Clemens' views were closer to northern views than were his own. He was not, he insisted, guilty of knavery and treason and would discredit Clemens as a witness.

Citing numerous speeches that Clemens had made during the compromise debates, Rhett attempted to demonstrate that Clemens had once held positions similar to his own current views. At one time, Rhett said, he had considered Clemens to be a brilliant leader of the southern cause, but that was before Clemens modified his point of view. In 1850, Clemens had been looked on as a "State Rights, Resistance Man"; now, he was looked on as a submissionist. Then, he had denounced the compromise measures as unconstitutional and unendurable; now, he said the Compromise was constitutional and a source of great blessings. Then, he had denounced those who supported compromise as traitors; now, he was one himself and called resisters traitors. Then, he had said the states were sovereign; now, he said they were not. Then, he supported secession; now, he denounced it. Then, he had vindicated the rights and honor of the South; now, he did not. In Alabama, Clemens was now a submissionist doing what he could to quell the "proud spirit of resistance" which he had earlier helped to raise. After going over to submission "utter and entire," he now denounced those who followed his old views because they would not bow to "an ignominious surrender."

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<sup>56</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirty-Second Congress, First Session, 93-97.



Indeed, Clemens had announced that he would not support repeal of any part of the Compromise, not even the part related to stoppage of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. In closing, Rhett cited the Buford and McCall letters from Alabama alleging that Clemens had pledged himself to support President Taylor in order to secure Whig support for his election to the Senate in 1849. In light of the perfidious nature of Clemens, Rhett concluded, his character did not entitle him to be a judge of others.<sup>57</sup>

Clemens answered Rhett in a speech denouncing Rhett and defending himself. Rhett, he pointed out, had sent him a note apprising him of his coming speech and had given prior notice to the press and the galleries that the speech was forthcoming. In his speech, said Clemens, Rhett had demonstrated both an ignorance of the history of the Compromise and of Clemens' views. In fact, Rhett had drawn conclusions so false that they could be attributed only to a "blind and rabid spirit of disunion" which prevented him from seeing facts that should be "as apparent as the noon-day sun." Denying that he had called Rhett a knave and a traitor, Clemens insisted that he had referred to abolitionist support of Rhett only in a figurative sense. If Rhett had really believed that the charges of knave and traitor were real ones, suggested Clemens, he should not have waited two months to reply and should have replied by means other than a speech. A true man, he said, would have looked for redress elsewhere. Instead of taking a manly course, however, Rhett had sought to discredit Clemens in the Senate by promoting false impressions about him. Although he denied that he had "calumniated" Rhett, Clemens admitted that he had refused to be introduced to him when Rhett first entered the Senate and that he had never sought Rhett's company. But, he maintained, he had not sought to make Rhett's character the theme of discussion in the Senate because it was "too small." Rhett, he said, was like the viper which made a hissing sound but had no sting. In reading from letters relating to Clemens' election in 1849, Rhett had resurrected a dead carcass, for the slanders included in the letters had already been disproved. The charges were a "foul lie, unmitigated and unredeemed by the slightest resemblance of

<sup>57</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-Second Congress, First Session, 640-647.



truth." Whatever had occurred in 1849, moreover, Clemens asserted, he had never deserted Democratic principles.<sup>58</sup>

In a continuation of his speech on the following day, Clemens explained that he could have replied to Rhett with an even temper if Rhett had restricted his criticism to his political course, his alleged inconsistencies, or his abandonment of state rights; but, after Rhett had quoted from the columns of a "low and scurrilous newspaper," he had felt compelled to give a full answer. For the language used he had no regrets. Now that he was calmer, however, he felt that enough had been said about the newspaper charges. Turning to Rhett's charges of inconsistency, Clemens insisted that Rhett had misrepresented him in claiming that he was a thorough state rights man in 1850 but a consolidationist in 1851. Apparently, Rhett had misunderstood his use of the term "sovereign" as applied to states. Earlier, said Clemens, he had denied the right of a President to subdue a state, but he had never denied the right of Congress to do so under proper circumstances. Indeed, existence of the Union depended on the authority to coerce states. Clearly, sovereignty of states had been circumscribed by the Constitution; for, in it, the states had given up some attributes of sovereignty, such as the right to make treaties. Whatever the facts of the case, however, Clemens said he could expect only detraction from the "tribe of constitutional exponents" who chose to respond with such terms as "federalist consolidationist and submissionist" when they heard arguments they could not answer. Conceding that he had said he would go with Alabama if she left the Union, he insisted that he had not intended to imply that the state had the right to secede. A state, he felt, could leave the Union by asserting the right of revolution, and he could happily join his state if it so acted. In recent past, he added, he had been trying to calm restless feeling while Rhett and his group had been trying to stir up prejudice and animosity.

Regardless of claims that had been made, Clemens said, he had never been a disunionist. In 1850, the term disunion had been used, but it was looked on only as a "desperate remedy for intolerable oppression" and was contemplated with a shud-

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<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 647.

der. In light of the existing state of affairs, immoderate language had been appropriate. Later, however, Northerners had dropped the Wilmot Proviso, taken a more cooperative attitude, and granted the South several concessions in the Compromise. Now that the spirit of fanaticism had subsided in the North, he no longer saw a need to persist in a course of denunciation. He had, he said, opposed the admission of California, but had ultimately submitted to admission because resistance would have been "folly and madness." Since representatives of several cotton states had voted for the California bill, secession of a few states would have made no sense because it would have resulted in a "little Confederacy on the Gulf." When the question became one of "submission or civil war," he had taken the calmer course while the Rhettites and abolitionists had stressed differences. He wanted no discordant Union bound together by bonds of force but one in which each section cherished "habitual respect" for the rights of others. If the whole of the South decided to leave the Union, surmised Clemens, they might be allowed to go peaceably, for coercion would be difficult. But force would certainly be used if one or a few states attempted to secede, and lasting peace was unlikely if a separate Confederacy were set up.

Answering Rhett's charge that he had left Washington in 1850 a submissionist, Clemens conceded that he had returned to Alabama prepared to submit to the law. Even though the South had not won on all issues, he said, it had obtained enough concessions with which to be content. Upon his return to Alabama, he had found demagogues haranguing the people in an effort to convince them that they had been wronged, outraged, and robbed. In spite of bitter attacks on him by this element, Clemens declared, he had dared to tell Alabamians the truth. The results of the Alabama election in 1851 proved that they had listened to him, for all candidates had been forced to deny that they were secessionists or disunionists. He, and most Southerners, were both submissionists and Southern Rights men, indeed, better Southern Rights men than was Rhett. They were devoted both to the South and the Union. The voice of the demagogue, he concluded, must be answered with "truth and reason."<sup>59</sup> Because of the stinging attack on Rhett, some

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<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 652-654.

predicted that a duel would follow.<sup>60</sup>

Rhett answered, however, in a speech in which he maintained that Clemens had attacked him without provocation and that he had added insult to injury by calling him a traitor and a knave. He admitted that, considering the provocation, he should not have delayed so long in making a reply and that, possibly, he should have replied in a different manner. Rhett had not, he said, issued a challenge because of two reasons: he was a professor of religion and did not think it proper to engage in a duel, and he wished to vindicate a higher cause than his own honor. He had been a Christian for more than twenty years and feared God more than man. In his speeches, he said, he had attempted to point up great conservative principles arising from state rights and state sovereignty, without which there would be a "consolidated despotism." The consolidators were traitors if anyone was, not he. Regardless of what Clemens said, there could not be two sovereignties, for sovereignty was "the supreme ultimate authority." It resided in the states, which had allowed the United States to exercise certain elements of it. But the states could resume their authority whenever they thought proper. True courage, said Rhett, could be best evidenced by the "firm maintenance" of principles amidst temptations and trials. In defending himself against the assaults of Clemens, he had been alone but alone without fear. In bringing up the Alabama correspondence, he insisted, he had brought up a public matter; for if the charges in the letters were true, Clemens should be unseated.<sup>61</sup>

In a brief reply, Clemens asserted that he was the equal of Rhett in place, learning, reputation, estimation of the Senate, and estimation of the country and stated that he had expected the issue to "terminate without the Senate." He had not known, he said, that Rhett was a church member until the night before. Once he had heard of this fact, he had decided not to use offensive expressions against Rhett. At the same time, he felt that Rhett's religious convictions should have prevented him from using provocative language rather than serving as an excuse for avoiding the consequences. How, he asked, could

<sup>60</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, March 24, 1852.

<sup>61</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-Second Congress, Second Session, 654-656.

Rhett have had Christian charity and still have held a "malignant bitterness" which would have been a credit "to a fiend"? How could he have planned at the foot of the altar "a cold-blooded and deliberate assault upon the reputation of a fellow man?"<sup>62</sup>

During his last two years in the Senate, Clemens became deeply involved in two serious matters related to American foreign relations: debate concerning the appropriate American attitude toward the Hungarian exile Louis Kossuth and debate concerning the appropriate response to an Anglo-French proposal involving the future of Cuba. In December, 1851, Clemens spoke at length against a resolution to give an official welcome to Kossuth. He preferred that champions of Kossuth content themselves with leaving him in the hands of the people instead of attempting to commit the government to "his schemes of revolutionizing Europe." Even though Kossuth's friends passed him off as a republican in principle and called him a great disseminator of republican sentiments in Europe, said Clemens, such was not the case. Instead, Kossuth had become a republican only after defeat and misfortune had overtaken him in Europe. Kossuth's purpose in Hungary, he said, had been establishment of the "supremacy of the Magyar race" and a monarchical government, not a republican one. In fact, he and his friends had sought to break away from one kind of oppression in order to establish another kind of oppression. What a person practiced, declared Clemens, should be examined along with what he preached. While Kossuth had been in power, he had not uttered republican sentiments. If he was now a republican, his views had changed recently. Despite arguments of some to the contrary, asserted Clemens, Kossuth was not a "guest of the nation." Rather, the United States had offered asylum to him and his associates. Under the circumstances, Kossuth's reception should be left in the hands of the public which could have pageants and processions for him if they wished.

Clemens then expressed fears that Kossuth would become an agitator instead of an immigrant, that he would attempt to use the United States for political purposes. Already, he had

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<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 656.



shown too much vanity and, in speeches to public groups, had actually attempted to intervene in internal matters of the United States. Wherever Kossuth had gone, he had proclaimed himself as a "political missionary." He, Clemens felt, wished to induce England and the United States "to combine for the purpose of preventing Russian interference with the affairs of Europe," to cause the United States to abandon the tradition of Washington and become a guardian of the nations of Europe. The United States, Clemens warned, should be cautious in any official action it took and guard against offending Russia. Adoption of the policy supported by Kossuth could lead either to ridicule or to the use of "cannonballs and bayonets," for Russia would likely scorn the United States and remind Americans of the strife that had recently divided their own people.<sup>63</sup> Supporters of Kossuth expressed regret that Clemens had spoken so harshly about their hero and predicted that the outside world would make a great deal of the speech.<sup>64</sup>

When the subject of Kossuth's visit came up again two months later, however, Clemens again vigorously attacked him and his activities. He was alarmed, he said, that some were talking about giving "material aid" to Hungary. He regretted that, because a foreigner who was also an orator and a hero had come to America "preaching a crusade against the nations of the Old World," some had been won over to his cause. Unfortunately, he felt, the voice of wisdom had been drowned by "the wild shouts of the frenzied mob." Despite Kossuth's claims to the contrary, he did not understand the "simple creed" of republican. Accustomed to pomp and pageantry he demanded both wherever he went. While in Washington, he had not even visited Mt. Vernon. Clemens doubted whether American interests justified giving aid to the Magyars to help them throw off Austria rule, for both Austria and Russia could be expected to crush any resistance. There would be a risk of war abroad and militarism at home. Embarkation on a policy of intervention would require a large outlay for expansion of the army and navy. If war followed, moreover, great losses in trade would result bringing suffering to shippers, manufacturers, and farmers. Too, a project of intervention would require co-

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 52-54.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.



operation with the British who mostly looked out after their own interests. Citing Washington's warnings against foreign entanglements in his Farewell Address, Clemens pointed out that all subsequent presidents had heeded his warning. As a consequence, the United States had attended to its own affairs for several decades and had become "rich, happy, and powerful." The task of the United States, he concluded, was still a mission of peace, not a mission of blood.<sup>65</sup>

On February 7, 1853, following the election of Franklin Pierce as President, Clemens made a major speech concerning a possible tripartite agreement calling for non-intervention in Cuba which had been suggested by Great Britain and France. Prior to his speech, Lewis Cass of Michigan had introduced resolutions opposing further colonization by Europe powers in the Western Hemisphere and suggesting that any European interest in Cuba should be considered an unfriendly act. It was regrettable, said Clemens, that senators had not been given more information and that the President-elect had not been consulted earlier about the subject, for it would have been more politic to have let the new administration take the first steps in such a major policy matter. There were times in history, Clemens reminded the Senate, when a false move could be followed by years of suffering; the United States, he feared, was approaching such a period when her conduct would lead to good or evil. Heretofore, the government had respected the advice of Washington and had steered clear of the "tangled web of European politics." During this period, the growing power of the United States had awed Europeans and had caused them to see her as a rival destined to overshadow their countries. Following the Mexican War, in which the United States had defeated a nation of 7,000,000 people and dictated terms of peace, foreigners no longer laughed at the inadequacy of American military forces but commented about their strength. Now, he felt, Britain and France, in an effort to check the territorial expansion of the United States, had asked her to join them in a commitment to the Crown of Spain to leave control of Cuba undisturbed for all time. Beyond what the proposal specifically suggested, moreover, Britain and France had conveyed a veiled threat to the United States that they were watching Cuba and

<sup>65</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix) Thirty-Second Congress, First Session, 179-181.

were determined to resist any American efforts to acquire it.

To redeem any threat from contempt, said Clemens, any party making one should be prepared to carry it into effect. Britain, he believed, could not afford to declare war on the United States. She depended on southern cotton; she was afraid of an uprising among her own downtrodden masses, and she feared an American invasion of Canada and attacks on her commerce. She would not be willing to save Cuba for Spain at the expense of losing Canada. France, likewise, was in no condition to challenge the United States. Her imperial throne, recently established, was sitting on a volcano ready to erupt at any time. Since the ocean was not her element, moreover, she could not safely land an army on American soil. "Vessels of war, manned by peasantry," declared Clemens, represented "feeble foes." The proposition made by Britain and France, nevertheless, had been seized upon as a means to "inflame the people's minds." Resentment excited by it, he feared, might lead to offensive acts on the part of the United States which could lead to conflict. The United States, he suggested, should laugh to scorn any implied threat, certainly a better policy than yielding to the dictates of "hasty resentment." Cuba could then be taken by the United States when it was "right and needful" for her to take it. Impatient with those who wanted to take Cuba immediately, he insisted that the United States could wait until the "pear ha[d] ripened."

The best foreign policy for the United States, declared Clemens, was for her to attend to her own business and not to assume guardianship over all mankind. The Christian creed did not teach that one country should covet the possessions of its neighbors or indulge in lawless war and conquest. Some, nevertheless, dignified war in the name of progress. Signs of such dangerous trends had been evident during the visit of Kossuth, in the efforts of Americans to take Cuba, and in the apparent efforts of Young America to bring about a war with any country on any pretext. To him, progress did not require hanging out a glove (as in the days of old) as a challenge to others to engage in combat and risking unknown dangers in order to inculcate principles "by the edge of the sword." Should such a spirit continue into the future, Clemens envisioned a day, after the United States had taken Cuba and Canada,

when it would seek to impose its will on all the world in order to enact "the bloody drama of American progress."

Immediate annexation of Cuba, Clemens asserted, would be of questionable propriety. Already in possession of vast territory and already prosperous in many ways, the United States should not covet the last little island of Spain's once mighty empire. She did not need Cuba for either agriculture or national defense. Since Tortugas and Key West commanded the Gulf trade and even Cuba itself, the United States should fortify this territory instead of taking that belonging to Spain. Annexation of Cuba, he said, would not only add to American military costs but would also cost the United States five or six million dollars a year in lost tariff revenues. It would, moreover, injure residents of the southern states because Cuba would become a powerful rival in the production of staple crops. With the removal of tariff duties on Cuban sugar, this product would flood the American market. Indeed, annexation of Cuba would lead to expansion of Cuban sugar production and probably bring disaster to American planters. Suggesting an additional problem, Clemens pointed out that not one of Cuba's 1,200,000 people (including 400,000 slaves) understood the republican system or had exercised the right of suffrage. To such a people, introduction of the American governing system would be a curse, probably leading to anarchy and violence. Annexation of Cuba could, moreover, lead to religious disturbances, for the Catholic religion would lose its special privileges. The impact of such a change on an "ignorant, bigoted, and superstitious race" could not be predicted. A further problem, he noted, involved the presence of many ignorant and vicious blacks on the island. Now kept under control by the Spanish military presence, the United States would have to develop a means for controlling them. With Cuba in the hands of Spain, these problems could be averted, and Cuba would be of "inestimable value" in wartime because the commerce of the Gulf states could be poured into its harbors and reshipped in neutral vessels.

Concluding, Clemens said that he was opposed to any joint action in cooperation with Britain and France and also to a reaffirmation of the Monroe Doctrine. Since the Monroe Doctrine had been announced many years ago, American policy

was well known. Silence would indicate determined resolution on the part of the United States. He feared, nevertheless, that those who spoke of "progress," "manifest destiny," and "overruling necessity," would lead the nation into a situation in which freedom would be lost amid the clash of arms. Americans should, he warned, ponder long and well before they tampered with "so high and holy a trust."<sup>66</sup>

Although some had hoped that Clemens would support the Whig Party in the 1852 presidential canvass, he remained loyal to the Democratic Party and supported the ticket of Franklin Pierce and William Rufus King. Both the candidates and the platform met the tests he had formulated earlier in the year. As part of his contribution to the Democratic effort, Clemens spoke in the eastern United States, sometimes from the same platform with John van Buren. For his association with the free soil sympathizer van Buren, he was attacked by some in the South but defended by others who stressed the importance of party unity.<sup>67</sup>

Despite his support of Pierce and King, Clemens had a high regard for Winfield Scott, the Whig candidate for President. At the short Second Session of the Thirty-second Congress, he took a lead in seeking congressional approval for conferring the rank of lieutenant general on Scott. Next to Washington, he declared, no other American deserved the honor more. He had, he said, enjoyed hospitality at Scott's home, had fought under his banner, and had sat at his table in the capital of a conquered nation. Having known Scott as a soldier and as a citizen, he could testify to his honesty, his integrity, and his patriotism. Clemens pleaded with those who had opposed the Mexican War as "unjust and iniquitous" not to vote against Scott's promotion simply because he had led American armies during the war.<sup>68</sup>

In the meantime, rumors had been afloat that Clemens would be included in the Pierce cabinet, perhaps as Secretary of War. According to reports that were in circulation, relations were good between Pierce and Clemens, both "politically and

<sup>66</sup>*Congressional Globe* (Appendix), Thirty-Second Congress, Second Session, 156-158.

<sup>67</sup>Montgomery, *Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, September 6, 17, October 8, 1852.

<sup>68</sup>*Congressional Globe*, Thirty-Second Congress, Second Session, 110; Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, January 12, 1853.



personally." Clemens had been a colonel in a New England Regiment, moreover, and had become acquainted with other influential New Englanders. Others reported, however, that Clemens might not be tolerated in the cabinet and that King's election as vice president would be to his disadvantage. Under the influence of Jefferson Davis, Pierce apparently shunned placing any former Unionists in his cabinet.<sup>69</sup> Later, Clemens denied that he would have accepted an appointment if one had been offered to him. For whatever reason, Clemens was not offered a position in the Pierce administration and came home facing almost certain defeat in the forthcoming senate race. In this period, he must have felt, as he had once said Daniel Webster felt after the Seventh of March Speech:

You have many enemies that know not  
Why they are so, but like to village curs,  
Bark when their fellows do.<sup>70</sup>

Because of the long-standing complaint that Clemens had made a deal with the Whigs in 1849, his recent clash with Robert Barnewell Rhett, and the charge that he drank heavily, his chances of retaining the Senate seat were almost non-existent. One critic called him a "degraded man" who was "unhorsed everywhere." Another suggested that Clemens only chance for reelection would be for him to seek Whig assistance and predicted that such aid would not be forthcoming. By October 1, 1853, with four other well-known North Alabama leaders in the race, Clement C. Clay, Jr., David Hubbard, Leroy Pope Walker, and George S. Houston, a perceptive Alabama figure wrote that Clemens did not seem to be "in their way." True to this prediction, Clement C. Clay Jr. was nominated by the Democratic caucus and easily elected by the General Assembly. Democratic ranks held firm, and the Whigs did not support an alternative candidate. Although not officially a candidate, Clemens received six votes.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, December 22, 1852, February 9, 23, 1853; Mobile, *Daily Register*, February 21, 1853; Livingston, *Sumter County Whig*, May 3, 1853.

<sup>70</sup>Huntsville, *Southern Advocate*, November 24, 1852; Huntsville, *Democrat*, June 8, 1853.

<sup>71</sup>Livingston, *Sumter County Whig*, July 12, November 30, December 7, 1853; Huntsville, *Democrat*, September 22, December 8, 1853; John Bragg to Bolling Hall, September 8, 1853, Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; Clement C. Clay to Bolling Hall, September 30, 1853, Hall Papers; A. J. Pickett to Bolling Hall, October 1, 1850, Hall Papers.









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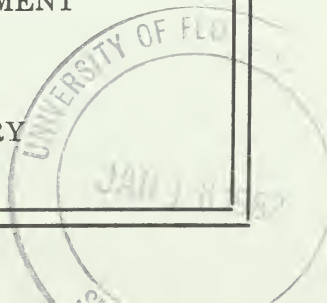
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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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BLACK LIVES, RED TAPE:  
THE ALABAMA FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

by

Kenneth B. White

In March 1865, when the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was established in Washington D. C. supporters of racial justice were extremely hopeful. Not only was the Civil War winding down to a successful conclusion, but the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery was on its way to ratification, and the federal government had seemingly committed itself to the struggle for racial adjustment in the Southern States.

The Freedmen's Bureau, as it was more familiarly known, was to be organized in the War Department with a national Commissioner and state organizations under Assistant Commissioners. It was to have complete authority in freedmen's affairs. Bureau personnel were authorized to handle justice, labor, relief, law, health, and could also set aside land for sale to freedmen and loyal refugees within the Southern States. These broad powers promising major results were seemingly only restricted by a lack of initial financial support. The latter deficiency was remedied in mid-1866 when Congress re-organized and expanded Bureau authority and appropriated \$6,926,450 for its activities.<sup>1</sup>

Yet within a few short years these initial actions and the high hopes they engendered for racial advancement had been dashed. The Freedmen's Bureau had disappeared and with it congressional support for land distribution, education, relief, labor, and equal justice for southern blacks. Why did the promising program, so dramatic in its inception, disappear so quickly and fail so utterly? Numerous explanations and critiques have been offered over the years. For some scholars Andrew Johnson has loomed large as the villain. Other historians have seen weaknesses in the local and national leadership of the Bureau. The failure of a true national commitment

<sup>1</sup>*U. S. Statutes-at-Large*, XIII, 507-09; XIV, 91-2, 176-77.



to racial reform, some have argued, meant ultimate failure. All these explanations have validity. Yet, in all the assessments of the Bureau from the early writings of Paul Peirce and W. E. Burghardt DuBois through the more contemporary views of George Bentley, John and LaWanda Cox, and William S. McFeely one major limitation has been consistently overlooked, one problem which above all others precluded the likelihood of success: bureaucratic mismanagement. The most debilitating aspect of Bureau operations was the incredible bureaucracy and red tape which strangled the efficiency of the organization.<sup>2</sup>

In Alabama the situation was strikingly clear. From the earliest days until it ceased operations in July 1870, the Alabama Bureau was stymied by delays, indecision, administrative shuffling, manpower problems, and strangling paperwork. The appointment of Wager Swayne, the enduring Assistant Commissioner who served from July 1865 to January 1868, exemplified some of these problems. Major General Swayne was appointed head of the Alabama agency in June 1865, after the initial designee was unable to fill the position. Because of various delays Swayne did not arrive in Montgomery until late July. Upon arrival the General found the Bureau in limbo. Administration of the State had been divided between the Assistant Commissioners of Louisiana and Tennessee. While Tennessee's General Clinton Fisk had been moderately active

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<sup>2</sup>Hans L. Trefousse, *Impeachment of a President: Andrew Johnson, the Blacks, and Reconstruction* (Knoxville, 1975), 12-14, 29, 115-20; J. Thomas May, "The Freedmen's Bureau at the Local Level: A Study of a Louisiana Agent," *Louisiana History*, IX (1968), 5-19; William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen* (New Haven, 1968), 304-28; Martin Abbott, *The Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, 1865-1872* (Chapel Hill, 1967), vii-viii; Kenneth B. White, "Relief, Labor and Education: Some Aspects of the Alabama Freedmen's Bureau, 1865-1870," (unpublished M. A. Thesis, Florida State University, 1969), 124; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York, 1965), 131-35; Paul S. Peirce, *The Freedmen's Bureau; A Chapter in the History of Reconstruction* (Iowa City, 1904), 150-60; George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen's Bureau* (Philadelphia, 1955), 72-3, 136-39, 214; W. E. Burghardt DuBois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVII (March, 1901), 354-65; John and LaWanda Cox, "General O. O. Howard and the 'Misrepresenter Bureau,'" *The Journal of Southern History*, XIX (November, 1953), 427-56; LaWanda Cox, "The Promise of Land for the Freedmen," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLV (1958), 413-40. The only published study of the Alabama Bureau is Elizabeth Bethel, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama," *The Journal of Southern History*, XIV (February, 1948), 49-92.

in Northern Alabama, Thomas Conway, the Louisiana Assistant Commissioner, had largely ignored his section of the state. Conway informed Swayne that he had not wanted to build another man's foundation. Disjointed and reluctant administration only made Swayne's job more difficult as time was essential to success.<sup>3</sup>

Despite early delays, the Assistant Commissioner quickly took hold and sought to complete his organizational structure and institute policies in the many areas of freedmen's affairs. Unfortunately, this was more difficult than expected. A limited number of officers were available to fill key positions both in the Montgomery headquarters and in the local agencies throughout the State. Several months elapsed before the staff was stabilized under Swayne. Even the selection of a Superintendent of Education was delayed because Swayne was unaware of any provision for such a position. When he finally realized that the post was available, having read of it in a speech given by Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard, Swayne wrote to request a Superintendent for Alabama. At the end of the year the position was still unfilled as the General was awaiting an answer from his first choice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>United States House. *Executive Document No. 11*, "Message From the President of the United States Transmitting Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands," 39th Cong., 1st Sess., 27; Thomas McAdroy Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, 1921), IV, 1639; *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1936), XVIII, 240-41; Wager Swayne Military Records, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D. C.; General Wager Swayne to Major General O. O. Howard, July 24, 31, 1865, Letters Sent by the Assistant Commissioner, hereinafter cited as Letters Sent. Records of the Alabama Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, hereinafter cited as BRFAL, Ala.; B. Gen. Clinton B. Fisk to Brig. Gen. Swayne, October 7, 10, 1865, Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner, hereinafter cited as Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala. Fisk administered Alabama above the 34th parallel until ordered to relinquish control on October 10, 1865. Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960), 28-41; William S. McFeely, "Unfinished Business: The Freedmen's Bureau and Federal Action in Race Relations," in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, and Daniel M. Fox, *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, vol. II (New York, 1971), 22. McKittrick and McFeely recognized that the period immediately following victory until approximately December 1865, held the greatest promise for a successful peace built on racial adjustment in the South. As time passed, those chances diminished proportionately.

<sup>4</sup>Brig. Gen. Wager Swayne to Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, September 11, August 28, 1865, January 31, 1866, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.

At the local level the Bureau advanced at an equally dilatory pace. With no appropriation, Swayne was forced to rely on military personnel or civil magistrates as agents under specific Bureau mandate. In the fall of 1865 the General urged the deployment of additional military personnel in Alabama to allow for the extension of Bureau agencies. Failing in this, Swayne began to pursue the utilization of citizen agents at Commissioner Howard's suggestion. By the end of the year sub-districts had been established in Demopolis, Greenville, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, and Tuskegee. However, at the time of Swayne's annual report in October 1866, the Tuskegee station had been abandoned and new facilities created at Tuscaloosa and Talladega. From that point until the general removal of services at the end of 1868, stations or sub-districts were sporadically created and abandoned. For example, a sub-district was established in Claiborne for two months in 1868, in Elyton for three months in the same year, and in Eufaula for one and one-half years from June 1867, to January 1869. Opelika had an agency for twenty months ending in December 1868, while Newton had one for two months in 1868. Agencies were also temporarily established in Girard, Eutaw, and Greensboro.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of continuity in Bureau stations created serious problems in dealing with the local population. The appearance and sometimes sudden disappearance of Bureau operations was a constant source of concern particularly to the black population which the agency was to service and protect.

As if the shuffling of offices were not enough, constant shifting of personnel profoundly compounded the problem. In Opelika, for example, the headquarters there operated under four separate Sub-Assistant Commissioners during its twenty month existence. Two of these officers served a total of four months. The final officer moved from clerk to Sub-Assistant Commissioner for the remaining two and one-half months of Bureau operations in 1868. In Mobile, the Bureau

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<sup>5</sup>Brig. Gen. Wager Swayne to Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, September 11, 18, 1865, Letters Sent; See also Reports of Operations From the Sub-Districts, hereinafter cited as Sub-District Reports, BRFAL, Ala.; Report of the Assistant Commissioner For Alabama, 1867, Lewis E. Parsons Papers, Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

operated under no fewer than eight different officers for an average of five months per administration. Demopolis and Talladega each had seven Sub-Assistant Commissioners, while Huntsville and Greenville each had six shifts in leadership. Montgomery and Selma had five and four commanders respectively.<sup>6</sup>

At Montgomery, the State headquarters was equally chaotic. The four separate Assistant Commissioners used seven Assistant Adjutant Generals, and five Superintendents of Education. During 1868, the last year of full Bureau activity, the Assistant Commissioners and School Superintendency changed hands four times. In personnel Lieutenant James Fell McGogy was a dramatic example of the bureaucratic wizardry of the agency. After serving initially as the Acting Assistant Quartermaster in Montgomery, the Indiana native moved on to Greenville as Assistant Superintendent. Within less than a year he was ordered to Talladega to assume command there. From there he eventually became Sub-Assistant Commissioner in Newton, a position which lasted only two months. McGogy finished his tenure with the Bureau with a five month reprise as head of the Greenville headquarters.<sup>7</sup>

In assessing Bureau effectiveness it is hard to minimize the impact of constant changes. If the agency was to be successful in assisting freedmen in their quest for a fair share in Alabama society, officials would have to establish themselves in local areas. Once they made their presence known they would have to effect a policy that could be enforced throughout their district. With policy established and enforcement procedures in place, their policies would need time to allow for acceptance and compliance: continuity in leadership and policy was essential. If all this could be accomplished the ultimate result would be confidence. The Bureau had to convince freedmen, undoubtedly skeptical of all whites, that its agents had their interests at heart and that ultimately those interests could be secured and protected. Without a clear policy and the power to enforce it, and, most important, the continuity that comes with consistent, effective, and enduring leadership,

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<sup>6</sup>Rosters of Bureau Personnel, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>7</sup>Rosters of Bureau Personnel, BRFAL, Ala.

blacks would never develop confidence in the Freedmen's Bureau.

Black concern was often expressed through petitions to the Bureau. Swayne received two pleas for the retention of C. W. Pierce, the Sub-Assistant Commissioner in Demopolis, one from blacks and one from local whites, who claimed that Pierce's removal would be "injurious to all." General O. L. Shepherd, the third Assistant Commissioner of 1868, was confronted with a similar request when blacks in Bluffton feared the removal of W. H. Hunter, the local agent. Their worst fears were confirmed two months later when Hunter, who had only served in the Bluffton area for four months, was transferred across the State. Even General Howard received a plea, fruitless nonetheless, from Alabama blacks when they anticipated the effects of shifting personnel.<sup>8</sup>

Constant turnover caused incredible confusion and a lack of continuity. Lack of funds and mustering out of troops caused problems with shifting personnel during the first year. As the years passed, however, the problem continued unabated. In 1865 agents and Superintendents wrote headquarters asking for aid. O. S. Abbott, a new Assistant Superintendent in Gainesville, did not know what to do about contracts or contract violations. "What if someone breaks a contract?" In Talladega conditions were profoundly confused. General A. L. Chetlain, the commanding officer in Talladega informed Swayne in November 1865, that Chaplain D. P. Cilley, the Assistant Superintendent, had left and no one was available to assume his duties. Chaplain T. Humphrey was appointed to fill the void but by the end of the month Humphrey was bemoaning his ineffectiveness. On the job for two weeks, and yet to hear from Swayne, he was unable to obtain necessary supplies from the Quartermaster. Frustrated and unsure as to his authority, Humphrey told Swayne, "Indeed this Bureau in this place has been carried on in a manner which was abhorrent to humanity and a burning disgrace to the country." A week later the Chaplain was still writing unanswered letters about

<sup>8</sup>W. B. Lane, *et al.* to Brig. Genl. W. Swayne, April 13, 1866; Lafayette Bates and Wife, *et al.* to Major General W. Swayne, April 13, 1866; Lafayette Reese, Lumpkin Reese, *et al.* to General O. L. Shepherd, June 11, 1868; Henry Fane, *et al.* to Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, January n.d., 1868, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.



the deplorable state of affairs. By the end of the month Humphrey was gone.<sup>9</sup>

The early months of 1866 saw no decline in such incidents. Young Rabb, administrator for Conecuh County, wrote asking for guidance as to his duties. W. C. Webb complained from Stevenson of "red tape" and "pigeonholes" between his town and the District headquarters in Huntsville. The Wisconsin native also averred that, "Since I have been here (only a little more than *two months*) there have been three different sub-agents appointed at this place — and not *one of them* has any of the 'orders' issued by you nor any from the War Department, nor from the Head of the Freeman's Bureau at Washington." Education Superintendent Chaplain Charles W. Buckley reported pessimistically about efforts in Talladega, saying, "Capt. Taylor had been but recently assigned to that position [Assistant Superintendent]. The frequency changes in the office of Asst. Supt. had caused great confusion in the affairs of the office, which combined with the inexperience of the present occupant, and the inefficiency of the Surgeon, compelled me to think that little has been done, of late, either to better the condition of the Freedmen or relieve the appalling destitution of the poor white." As personnel adjustments occurred confusion and frustration grew and continuity was dissipated.<sup>10</sup>

In 1867 reports reaching Montgomery revealed the same problems. James McGogy, the ubiquitous Bureau official wrote disconsolately of freedmen's affairs in the Talladega area, calling attention to the fact that, ". . . no officer [was present] at this Sub-District when the employer and employee were contracting for the coming year . . . ." James Seales of Lebanon, reported somewhat incredulously that, "the agent for the Bureau in this county knows nothing about the laws or rules of the Bureau or Civil Rights Bill . . . ." <sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>O. S. Abbott to Brig. Gen. Wager Swayne, September 14, 1865; Bvt. Maj. Gen. A. L. Chetlain to Swayne, November 10, 1865; T. Humphrey to Brig. Gen. Wager Swayne, November 30, December 8, 1865, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>10</sup>Young Rabb to Gen. Wager Swayne, January 10, 1866; W. C. Webb to Bvt. Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne, February 1, 1866, Letters Received; Chaplain C. W. Buckley to Bvt. Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne, January 16, 1866, Sub-District Reports, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>11</sup>J. F. McGogy to Col. O. D. Kinsman, August 3, 1867, Sub-District Reports; Jas. A. Seales to Gen. Swayne, January 11, 1867, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

Changes in administration, however, did not alone create the problems. Bureaucracy, the chain of command, and communications all played major roles. Constant requests poured into Montgomery for adjudication of cases, for orders, for guidance, often in areas that were unimportant or should have been dealt with at the local level. Bureau veterans such as John B. Callis, James McGogy, and Samuel Gardner, men who served in Alabama for years, were still writing for guidance in local problems by 1867.

In late 1867, Colonel Callis wrote Swayne regarding the abuse of freedmen's rights in crop distribution. Callis said, "May I *beg you* to give this matter your immediate attention?" Samuel Gardner, Greenville's Sub-Assistant Commissioner, was forced to expend valuable time writing headquarters requesting appropriations to purchase a carving knife and spring balance for cutting and weighing bacon for the destitute. Gardner also needed funds to purchase four coffins to bury deceased Bureau hospital patients. On another occasion the Greenville bureaucrat submitted a year-old bill, in triplicate, to pay for, among other things, a well bucket and some rope. James McGogy in Talladega was equally cautious, asking for permission to purchase \$33 worth of cooking utensils for the local Bureau hospital. Automomy and flexibility seemed non-existent as official after official went "upstairs" to obtain approval. Requests poured in for approval of expenditures for wood, forage, horse rentals, coffin lumber, or instructions regarding such important questions as labor regulations, ration distribution, adjudication of criminal or civil cases, and apprenticeship violations. In each instance the local agent either did not have or did not feel that he had sufficient authority to act on his own initiative. At times the bureaucratic tangle seemed insurmountable. A local agent sadly wrote Swayne about his impotence. "[It] makes the position I hold a very unpleasant one not being able to do for the negroes what I promised when they contracted for the year."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Bt. Brig. Gen. Jno. B. Callis to Major General Wager Swayne, November 8, 1867; Sam. S. Gardner to O. D. Kinsman, September 7, 1867; Sam. S. Gardner to Lt. J. F. Conyngham, March 27, 1867; J. F. McGogy to Col. O. D. Kinsman, February 21, 1867, Letters Received; R. H. Brewer to Maj. Gen. W. Swayne, November 29, 1866, Sub-District Reports, BRFal, Ala.

Even Ewayne occasionally became a prisoner of this process; on one occasion he wrote Howard seeking authority to sell surplus overcoats and use the funds to buy necessary clothing for women and children. Frequently the Assistant Commissioner had no other recourse than to seek aid from Washington officials. For example, in the early months of Bureau operations, Swayne repeatedly came into conflict with Treasury agents in the State. Jurisdiction was confused and authority insufficient to handle routine local problems. Swayne, in frustration, sought aid from above. "Major Noff, a Treasury agent at Selma is taking possession of lands and buildings owned by the late rebel government . . . . His claim is supported by superior authority, and I respectfully request that it be authoritatively set aside."<sup>13</sup>

One of the most debilitating displays of bureaucratic entanglement confronting Swayne was the struggle by the Alabama Bureau to obtain a suitable school site in Mobile. In 1865, a black school was instituted in the Mobile Medical College. It was a sizeable building that afforded excellent facilities for a graded school in one of the State's major cities. Despite Bureau control, the Trustees of the College were anxious to have the building returned. Swayne was equally anxious to maintain control. Early in 1866, Swayne was ordered by the Secretary of War to return the building to its owners and find another site for black education in Mobile. Reluctantly he moved to carry out this order until the inflammatory rhetoric of Dr. J. C. Nott, a conservative Mobilian and Bureau antagonist, and the burning of black churches in Mobile indicated to Swayne that black education was not safe outside the college building.<sup>14</sup>

At this point the General turned to the Marine hospital as the only viable alternative for black education in Mobile.

<sup>13</sup>Saml. S. Gardner to Chas. A. Miller, August 24, 1865; C. Cadle, Jr. to S. S. Gardner, September 15, 1865; S. S. Gardner to C. Cadle, Jr., October 2, 1865, Letters Received; Swayne to Howard, January 17, 1866, September 14, 1865, Telegrams Sent, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>14</sup>Bt. Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne to Colonel George D. Robinson, February 22, 1866; Bvt. Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne to Rt. Rev. Richard H. Wilmer, D. D., February 26, 1866; A. A. G. to Bt. Maj. Gen. W. Swayne, March 10, 1866, Letters Sent; J. C. Nott, M. D. to Gen. O. O. Howard, November 7, 1865, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

Between March and September 1866, Swayne underwent an incredible experience attempting to acquire the building. On going to the Treasury Department to obtain transfer to the Bureau, Swayne discovered the building was controlled by the War Department. Obtaining approval from the Secretary of War, Swayne moved to acquire the facility only to be confronted by Mobile Treasury officials who still mistakenly believed the Treasury Department controlled the hospital. To satisfy these bureaucrats, the Assistant Commissioner personally obtained transfer approval from the Secretary of the Treasury Hugh McCulloch. Even so, delays persisted. Fear of moving patients during small-pox and cholera season as well as the difficulty in obtaining a new facility slowed the process. Swayne, perhaps with tongue in cheek, suggested an exchange, transferring the patients to the Mobile Medical College and the students to the hospital. Swayne persisted, however, if only to thwart the Mobile incendiaries who seemed determined to burn any church used for educational purposes. He was determined to have a building "which they cannot set on fire."<sup>15</sup>

By the end of 1866 the Assistant Commissioner had decided to take occupancy March, 1867. Yet in March he finally had to admit defeat and abandon all hope of securing the building for black education. Recognizing defeat, he then moved to establish separate but permanent schools for Mobile blacks in other ways. Red tape, combined with Southern white hostility, had defeated an otherwise sound educational endeavor.<sup>16</sup>

In relief, the red tape seemed to inhibit an otherwise able effort. Colonel Callis, the Huntsville Sub-Assistant Commissioner, complained to the Assistant Commissioner that while there was neglect, waste, and squandering of rations, he was powerless to halt the process. Rations for distribution in North

<sup>15</sup>Bvt. Maj. General Wager Swayne to Major General O. O. Howard, April 27, 1866, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.; J. Silsby to Rev. Strieby, May 22, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, hereinafter cited as AMAA; Major General Wager Swayne to Charles P. Gage, June 1, 1866; Major General Wager Swayne to Surg. Chas. Kipp, September 29, 1866; Maj. Gen. Wager Swayne to Bvt. Maj. Geo. H. Tracy, December 10, 1866; Maj. Gen. Wager Swayne to Maj. Genl. George H. Thomas, December 18, 1866, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>16</sup>Maj. Gen. Wager Swayne to Maj. E. M. K. Hudson, December 28, 1866; Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne to Rev. J. R. Shipherd, March 14, 1867, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.



Alabama were sent to Callis but from there they went to the distributing agents in the counties who "... regard themselves as responsible to [the State Commissioner for Destitution] Mr. Cruikshanks [sic] only. I, therefore can do nothing . . . . Without definite orders from you, I don't see how I can be instrumental in causing said stores promptly and thoroughly to fulfill the mission contemplated by the appropriation for their purchase." Even if this problem could be eliminated there was still the requirement that the rations be disposed of on time. Under War Department regulations a county agent, late in picking up his county's quota, could be denied access to the supplies under restrictions prohibiting collection of back rations. Yet the limitations of time and distance could easily preclude collection within the prescribed period.<sup>17</sup>

Travel, of course, was always a problem, but especially for the freedpeople. Handled properly the locale of Bureau agents would have had an ameliorating effect on racial affairs. Instead, geographic decisions proved to be a chaotic bungle. Not only did the locale change indiscriminately, but agents were not always within convenient traveling distance. Freedmen often were forced to travel from 10 to 40 miles to seek aid. Many freedmen simply could not make such trips. Coercion, economic inability, and other factors easily precluded such journeys. Even if such a trip was undertaken and aid requested, there was no guarantee that a remedy would be provided. In many instances a report, inquiry, or request for approval from headquarters would cause serious delays. The trip would then have to be repeated at loss of time, perhaps wages and possible personal danger. How many trips a freedman would make under such circumstances was questionable. Already conditioned to doubt a white man's good faith or honest concern, dubious blacks were additionally disillusioned by delays, multiple trips and likely Bureau impotence. "Our hopes have been awakened and almost insured by the passage of a law & then the sending of men clothed with the proper authority to execute the law to our good & to the good of the entire people," several Mobile blacks reflected, "but as yet we

<sup>17</sup>M. H. Cruikshank to the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, November n. d., 1866, Miscellaneous Reports from Staff and Bureau Officers; Bvt. Col. Jno. B. Callis to General Wager Swayne, January 15, 1867, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.



have realized nothing but delays, annoyance & disappointment." Another beleaguered black wrote puzzlingly, "I have spoken to Major Tracy here who, told me so many tales that, I cannot but remember the final decision made by him . . . ." <sup>18</sup>

In the Selma Sub-district Samuel Gardner became concerned and inquired of headquarters for relief. He had discovered that blacks in Lowndes and Autauga Counties were coming to his office rather than seeking aid at their district headquarters in Montgomery. For these people it was up to three times farther to Montgomery than to Gardner's office in Selma. His concern was unheeded and his request for flexibility was rebuffed. Gardner was told that blacks must continue to travel the extra distance regardless of the difficulty. The problem also compounded the difficulty of ration acquisition. Often the truly needy were incapable of traveling 20 or 30 miles to draw much needed supplies. As one American Missionary Association correspondent testified, "Poor widows and orphans cannot walk 20 or 30 miles to Huntsville to Decatur to draw their rations . . . ." <sup>19</sup>

State borders occasionally compounded the already difficult situation. In East Alabama, residents of Russell County bordering on Georgia turned to the Columbus, Georgia headquarters for assistance as their closest source of aid. Charles Buckley, on a tour of East Alabama in early 1866, expressed concern over obvious Bureau ineffectiveness. While visiting Columbus officials, he witnessed two black Alabama women, together with their children, enter the local office to seek assistance. They had all been hit by shotgun fire from Alabama militiamen, and no redress had been available in their area. Buckley's investigation into affairs in Russell County showed the need for Bureau presence there. Indeed, conditions were so bad that even Howard's office was concerned about it. Swayne was questioned about, "what steps have been taken to right the freedmen in this dark corner of Alabama. From the within report [Buckley's] it would appear as though the

<sup>18</sup>Allen Alexander, *et al.* to Major Genl. Wager Swayne, June 25, 1867; G. Benedict to Maj. Gen. Pope, August 31, 1867, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>19</sup>S. S. Gardner to C. Cadle, September 11, 1865; C. Cadle Jr. to S. S. Gardner, September 15, 1865, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.; Mrs. M. C. Milligan to Rev. S. Hunt, July 31, 1866, AMAA.

rebellion was still in full force and the Proclamation of Emancipation a 'dead letter'."<sup>20</sup>

In still other circumstances the Bureau barely penetrated many areas. Tuscaloosa Sub-Assistant Commissioner William Peck expressed concern that his agency's effectiveness did not extend beyond a 20 mile radius. An early black petition informed Swayne that in Tuscumbia, "The BeauRoue [sic] an't [sic] no more then [sic] a cat here." Reports emanating from Union Springs, Selma, Tuskegee and the Demopolis district echoed these concerns. In fact, one recent study of the Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama suggests that in the first two years of operation the agency reached less than one quarter of the State's black population.<sup>21</sup>

In homesteading the problems were similar. Travel and location were as burdensome here as in other areas. Where the Bureau did afford the opportunity to register for land in absentia, freedmen still had to submit a statement of financial inability to appear in person. Additionally, in early 1867, despite the right to enter land, the land office was not open for Southern and Western Alabama.<sup>22</sup>

If all this were not enough, local and State Bureau officials were inundated with reports and forms to be filled out and filed. Quartermaster blanks, pay vouchers, reports to the War Department regarding locale of assignment, Bureau reports of a similar character, referral of bounty requests, educational reports, referral of correspondence, endorsement of correspondence emanating from local sources, and tri-monthly ration re-

<sup>20</sup>Capt. P. Slaughter to Brig. Gen. D. Tillson, October 16, 1865, Letters Received; C. W. Buckley to Brvt. Col. C. Cadle Jr., January 27, 1866, endorsed by Max Woodhull, Washington, D. C., Sub-District Reports, BRFAL, Ala. Swayne also received word of a similar situation along the Mississippi-Alabama border. Wm. R. Gallian to Gen. Woods, August 19, 1865, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>21</sup>Capt. Wm. H. H. Peck to Major O. D. Kinsman, June 20, 1866; Petter Mesenger, *et al.* to n. n., November 29, 1865; A. C. Tyree to Maj. Gen. W. Swain [sic], March 4, 1867; Capt. E. M. Clark to Brevet Col. C. Cadle, January 4, 1866; S. S. Gardner to C. Cadle, September 16, 1865; Lt. Colonel Andrew Geddis to Colonel C. Cadle Jr., December 18, 1865, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.; Horace McLean Holderfield, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama in 1865 and 1866," (unpublished M. A. Thesis, Auburn University, 1970), 72.

<sup>22</sup>O. D. Kinsman to Y. M. Rabb, January 11, 1867, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.

ports all plagued local personnel. This was exemplified by General Order No. 8, which Swayne issued in 1865. It stipulated that,

Assistant Superintendents will send to this office on the first, tenth, and twentieth days of each month a report of rations issued.

The report will show the number of detached soldiers, citizens, employees, persons in colony, and those relieved outside, to whom rations have been issued during the previous ten days, distinguishing between white and colored, adults and children.<sup>23</sup>

All these reports required significant amounts of time. Clerks might help but they were limited in ability, zeal, or availability. Even at that level bureaucracy could intervene. A series of letters between Greenville and Montgomery in 1867 exemplified the problems. Sub-Assistant Commissioner Gardner received word in May 1867, that he was about to be sent a clerk. His surprised reply that he already had employed a clerk was met by Acting Assistant Adjutant General Lieutenant J. F. Conyngham's statement that Gardner had no authority to employ a clerk. One would be sent to immediately take over that position. After a series of communiques, Gardner prevailed, maintained his original clerk, and sent back the Montgomery replacement, who turned out to be an inebriate. The status quo was eventually maintained but at the cost of considerable time, energy, and paperwork — all devoted to an embarrassing bureaucratic tangle.<sup>24</sup>

Such machinations and negotiations all transpired through the mails. Yet in numerous instances the mails themselves failed the Bureau, thus severely limiting effectiveness and continuity. Transportation, particularly in a State dislocated by

<sup>23</sup>Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne to Bvt. Maj. S. C. Greene, January 7, 1867; O. D. Kinsman to Supts., BRFAL, February 1, 1867, Letters Sent, BRFAL, Ala.; United States House. *Executive Document* No. 70, "Letter from the Secretary of War . . .," 39th Cong., 1st Sess., 41. For innumerable examples of this paperwork see Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>24</sup>Saml. S. Gardner to Lieut. J. F. Conyngham, May 6, 1867; Saml. S. Gardner to Col. Kinsman, May 19, 1867, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

war and economic stagnation was certainly less than reliable. Mail service especially suffered from irregular post-war conditions. George O'Reilly, a Bureau inspector, found such a situation in Clarke County, Alabama, late in 1866.

On making enquiries about the Post Office I was informed that the institution was unknown in the County.

Letters directed to any person residing in Clarke Co. have to be entrusted to the clerk of some river boat, if the boat stops at this landing (Gainestown), which it rarely does on the way down the river, the letters are perhaps sent on shore, they are then kept at a Storehouse on the bank, until the advent of the first stray traveller from the interior, when they are placed at his disposal to be by him delivered, opened or lost, according as his honesty, inquisitiveness or carelessness may predominate. I was informed not one third of the letters sent have ever reached their proper destination.<sup>25</sup>

While Clarke County was an extreme example, it was symptomatic of an additional Bureau problem. Compounding all other conditions which deterred effectiveness was the inconsistency, if not outright failure, of communication and transportation.

Finally, one of the most debilitating aspects of the Bureau was its inability to use military force to impose its decisions. Early on, Swayne and others recognized that force would be necessary to implement the Bureau program. Throughout the fall and winter of 1865-66, Swayne urged Howard to provide necessary military aid. The Mobile, Selma, and East Alabama Sub-Districts were in need of military support in 1865, both for agents and enforcement. Atrocities, labor violations and other problems required the ameliorating impact of "bayonets." In an attempt to obtain more support, Montgomery catalogued crimes for which troops were unavailable for redress. Even in the employment of military commissions

<sup>25</sup>George O'Reilly to O. D. Kinsman, October 17, 1866, Sub-District Reports, BRFAL, Ala.

for trials, General Charles R. Wood pled insufficiency of troops or officers to establish such boards.<sup>26</sup>

Colonel Callis emphasized the problem when he complained, "I am utterly powerless. If I am expected to guard the interests of the negro, secure him in the exercise of his rights and privileges, restore property stolen or appropriated, mete out justice to thieves, robbers and murderers and [countless] other things, I must have, and demand the military power to do it. As I am now situated, I have not a single bayonet with which to enforce any measures I may think it necessary and expedient to adopt . . . ." <sup>27</sup>

Callis's sentiments were echoed by many other Bureau officials across the State, as well as by the freedmen themselves. William V. Turner, a black teacher and future politician, implored the Bureau to protect Wetumpka blacks from the abuses of local white officials. From Dadeville, Thomas Young appealed to General Shepherd for protection. Young had been assaulted by a white and could find no assistance or protection as the town had no sheriff. Even his letter seeking aid had to be sent from another town because his assailant was an official in the local Post Office.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, in some instances, even when the military was present, it did not produce positive results. In December 1865, Swayne's headquarters received several complaints of military intransigence. In each instance the local military commander refused to accede to the wishes of a Bureau ad-

<sup>26</sup>Brig. Gen. Wager Swayne to Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, September 11, 1865, January 31, 1866; Lewis E. Parsons to President Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, Letters Sent; Bvt. Col. C. Cadle Jr. to Maj. Gen. C. R. Woods, March 27, 1866, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>27</sup>Bvt. Col. Jno. B. Callis to n. n., August 9, 1866, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.

<sup>28</sup>S. S. Gardner to C. Cadle Jr., September 16, November 1, 1865; Capt. F. Grabenhorst to Gen. Swayne, October 31, 1865; T. W. Goodfellow to Swayne, December 25, 1865; Capt. F. O. Steinberg to Colonel C. Cadle Jr., April 13, 1866; Capt. Wm. H. H. Peck to Major O. D. Kinsman, April 20, 1866; Benj. F. Porter to Major Genl. Wager Swayne, April 28, 1866; D. H. Bingham to Lieut. Genl. U. S. Grant, May 19, 1866; J. F. McGogy to Col. O. D. Kinsman, October 21, 1867; W. H. Hunter to Genl. n. n., August 16, 1868; R. A. Wilson to Bt. Lt. Col. Edwin Beecher, September 3, 1868; William V. Turner to Gen. Wager Swayne, November 17, 1865; Thos. Young to Gen. O. L. Shepherd, April 28, 1868, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala.



ministrator. The Quartermaster in Selma refused to issue stores to the Assistant Superintendent without orders from Swayne through the Quartermaster in Montgomery. Colonel Gandolfo in Greenville even refused to recognize T. W. Mostyn as the head of the Bureau for that area. Two months later Mostyn was still complaining of military interference with no apparent help from Montgomery. Lacking the power and cooperation of the military, the Bureau was unable to protect freedmen's rights, allow for racial adjustment, or halt the coercion of freedpeople to keep them from even appealing to the Bureau for aid.<sup>29</sup>

While few will argue that the Alabama Bureau failed to provide a rational vehicle for Reconstruction, why it failed is still very much at issue. In Alabama the problem was institutional. Initially the identification of the military as the purveyor of social change was a crucial blunder. The rigid nature of the military, an organization so familiar with the concept of deference, chain of command, and the maintenance of the status quo certainly did not lend itself to the dynamics of race reform.

Further, from its entry into the State in 1865 until its demise five years later, the agency was plagued by instability and weakness. The continuous movement of Bureau agents and their headquarters led to a serious lack of continuity which in turn created confusion for the freedmen. Even when the former bondsmen were able to locate a Bureau agent, chances for successful resolution of their problems were seriously hampered by lack of local autonomy, chaotic communication systems, and the inability to use military force to implement decisions.

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<sup>29</sup>W. Irving Mieller to Col. C. Cadle, December 15, 1865; Lt. J. B. Morgan to Col. C. Cadle Jr., December 12, 19, 21, 1865; T. Mostyn to Col. C. Cadle Jr., December 14, 1865, February 18, 1866; Capt. Wm. H. H. Peck to Bvt. Maj. O. D. Kinsman, October 9, 1866, Letters Received; Capt. Wm. H. H. Peck to Bvt. Maj. O. D. Kinsman, October 10, 1866, Sub-District Reports; Over a year later reports of troublesome troops were still arriving from Greenville and Huntsville. Sam. S. Gardner to Lieut. J. F. Conyngham, February 17, 1867; Bvt. Col. John B. Callis to Maj. Genl. Wager Swayne, January 16, 1867, Letters Received, BRFAL, Ala. Inadequate troop strength is clearly delineated in James Sefton's *The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 261-62. Troop strength in Alabama declined from a high of 35,100 in June 1865, to less than 1000 by late 1866.

As Martin Abbott asserted in his study of the South Carolina Freedmen's Bureau, ". . . the real test of the Bureau's worth is to be found not so much in the aims of Congress in creating it, or in the will of the national Commissioner in directing it, but, rather, in how well or how feebly it met at the local level the actual needs of those whom it was designed to serve. As a human institution, its ultimate success or failure depended mainly upon the kind of response its agents and officers in the field gave to the challenge before them . . . ." <sup>30</sup>

It is this test which the Alabama Bureau fails. The organizational pressures on the agency were such that it substantially collapsed in a tangle of bureaucracy. In the attempt to translate national policy to local needs the aspirations of the freedmen and the hopes for racial adjustment were virtually strangled by red tape.

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<sup>30</sup>Abbott, *Freedmen's Bureau*, vii-viii.

## BUSINESS SUCCESS AND LEADERSHIP IN ALABAMA: A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

by

Robert H. McKenzie

Warner O. Moore

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Assessing business "success" is fraught with the difficulty of determining what a society considers "success" to be. But if peer approval can be used as a guide, a significant effort has been made toward studying the history of business leadership of Alabama in the first twenty-six selections to the Alabama Business Hall of Fame.<sup>1</sup>

Created in 1973 by the Board of Visitors of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at The University of Alabama to "honor, preserve, and perpetuate the names and outstanding accomplishments of business personalities who have brought lasting fame to the state," the Hall of Fame is the first of its kind in the nation. Nominations are made by a thirty-six member committee, representative of the geographical areas and major categories of business in Alabama. All candidates must have been deceased or in retirement at least three years except those who are 55 years of age and older and still active in business. The first twenty-six honorees were inducted posthumously.

The nature of the selection process, of course, influences the composition of this sample. Longevity of business career

<sup>1</sup>An earlier study is Justin Fuller, "Alabama Business Leaders: 1865-1900," *Alabama Review*, XVI (October 1963), 279-86, and XVII (January 1964), 63-65, which analyzes the careers of 186 Alabama business leaders in terms of their places of origin, family status, educational levels, military service, and political and religious activities. Fuller's analysis concentrates on characteristics of Alabama's late nineteenth-century business elite in a fashion similar to that of national studies. The most recent such study, which contains a thorough review of the literature on the subject is Jocelyn M. Ghent and Frederick C. Jaher, "The Chicago Business Elite: 1830-1930. A Collective Biography," *Business History Review*, L (August 1976), 288-328. Our study is oriented more toward individual personal characteristics.

and civic involvement increase the likelihood that a prospective inductee has been personally known to the members of the nominating body. Only seven of the twenty-six inductees, for example died before 1960. Nineteenth-century figures therefore have been lightly considered to date, and as a result, the state's coal, iron, steel, and railroad industries are underrepresented. This relative absence, however, is as much a statement about the nature of those industries in the twentieth century in Alabama as it is a comment on the selection process.

Table 1 lists the twenty-six subjects of this study in chronological order and indicates their principal areas of business activity, places of birth, chief residences, and educational levels. To relate individual careers to broader business and economic patterns, the twenty-six leaders have been grouped roughly by decade of birth. Pratt, the only antebellum figure, occupies one group by himself. Miller and Comer, both born in the 1840's, represent the Civil War and Reconstruction generation. Henderson, Pizitz, McGowin, Shook, Johnson, Russell, Rush-ton, Moody, and Jemison — all born between 1860 and 1878 — represent the immediate post-Civil War generations. Martin, Bedsole, Bidgood, Ayers, Persons, McMillan, and May — all born between 1881 and 1889 — represent the generation that matured in the early twentieth century. Sterne, Spragins, Warner, Samford, Malone, and Roberts — all born between 1892 and 1898 — represent Alabama's business leadership in the post-World War I period. Smith, born in 1906, belongs wholly to the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

Our first group consists of Daniel Pratt, who is generally regarded as Alabama's first significant industrialist. A native of Temple, New Hampshire, he received rudimentary education, was apprenticed as a carpenter, and moved to Georgia in 1821 at the age of twenty-two. There he worked as a carpenter, builder, and architect before becoming associated with the making of cotton gins. In 1833 he ventured to fresher cotton lands in central Alabama to establish his own factory. After several years of renting mill sites, he purchased water

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<sup>2</sup>Brief biographical sketches of these twenty-six business leaders are available in the annual programs for 1974-78 of the induction ceremonies for the Alabama Business Hall of Fame in the files of the Executive Director maintained in the College of Commerce and Business Administration at The University of Alabama.

TABLE I  
THE FIRST TWENTY-SIX INDUCTEES OF THE ALABAMA BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

Name	Dates	Area of Business	Place of Birth	Chief Residence(s)	Education
Daniel Pratt	1799-1873	Durable Manufacturing (Iron Products)	Temple, New Hampshire	Prattville	Apprenticeship
Thomas R. Miller	1843-1914	Durable Manufacturing (Lumber)	Escambia County (then Conecuh, Alabama)	Brewton	None
Braxton Bragg Comer	1848-1927	Nondurable Manufacturing (Textiles)	Barbour County, Alabama	Eufaula, Anniston, Birmingham	College
Charles Henderson	1860-1937	Wholesale Trade (Groceries)	Pike County, Alabama	Troy	Some College
Louis Pizitz	1868-1959	Retail Trade (General Merchandise)	Brest-Litovsk, Poland	Birmingham	Rabbinat
James Greeley McGowin	1871-1934	Durable Manufacturing (Lumber)	Escambia County, Alabama	Chapman	Rural School
Paschal Green Shook	1872-1966	Wholesale Trade (Mining Equipment)	Tracy City, Tennessee	Birmingham	High School
Crawford Toy Johnson	1873-1942	Wholesale Trade	Danville, Virginia	Birmingham	College
Benjamin Russell	1876-1941	Nondurable Manufacturing (Textiles)	Tallapoosa County, Alabama	Alexander City	College
James Franklin Rushton	1876-1927	Wholesale Trade (Ice)	Columbus, Tennessee	Birmingham	High School



Name	Dates	Area of Business	Place of Birth	Chief Residence(s)	Education
Frank Maxwell Moody	1877-1941	Banking	Tuscaloosa, Alabama	Tuscaloosa	College
Robert Jemison, Jr.	1878-1974	Real Estate	Tuscaloosa, Alabama	Birmingham	College
Thomas Wesley Martin	1881-1964	Electrical Power	Scottsboro, Alabama	Birmingham	College
Joseph Linyer Bedsole	1881-1975	Wholesale trade (General Merchandise; Drugs)	Clarke County, Alabama	Thomasville, Mobile	Business School
Lee Bidgood	1884-1963	Business Education	Norfolk County, Virginia	Tuscaloosa	Ph.D.
Harry Mell Ayers	1885-1964	Newspaper Publishing	Anniston, Alabama	Anniston	College
John Cecil Persons	1888-1974	Banking	Atlanta, Georgia	Birmingham	College
Ed Leigh McMillan	1888-1977	Durable Manufacturing (Lumber)	Escambia County, Alabama	Brewton	College
Ben E. May	1889-1972	Durable Manufacturing (Lumber)	Atlanta, Georgia	Mobile	Some College
Mervyn Hayden Sterne	1892-1973	Investment Banking	Anniston, Alabama	Birmingham	High School
Marion Beirne Spragins	1892-1973	Banking	Huntsville, Alabama	Huntsville	College
Elizabeth Westervelt Warner	1893-1974	Nondurable Manufacturing (Paper)	Mechanicsville, New York	Tuscaloosa	Some College

Frank Park Samford	1893-1973	Life Insurance	Troy, Alabama	Birmingham	College
Wallace Davis Malone, Sr.	1896-1968	Banking	Dothan, Alabama	Dothan	College
Edward Aubert Roberts	1898-1964	Transportation	Mobile, Alabama	Mobile	Some College
James Craig Smith	1905-1977	Nondurable Manufacturing (Textiles)	Birmingham, Alabama	Birmingham	College

rights and land on Autauga Creek near Montgomery, built his cotton gin factory, and established the town of Prattville. Although Pratt added lumber, grist, and cotton mills to his enterprises and became a vigorous antebellum spokesman for Southern industrialization, his cotton gin enterprise was the base of his fortune. In 1860 Alabama led the union in the production of cotton gin machinery, largely due to Pratt's factory.<sup>3</sup>

Pratt's willingness to take a risk, coupled with technical knowledge, market opportunity, and vision, marked his success. When he took his wife and manufacturing materials by wagon into Alabama, the area had been a state for only fourteen years; legend has it that his Georgia partner declined the venture, fearing Indians. Between 1830 and 1835, predominance in the production of cotton shifted from the Atlantic states to the Gulf states, and Pratt and his gins were there to meet the opportunity. In the mid 1850s he became a major stockholder and director of one of the state's earliest railroads, the South and North Alabama, which eventually fulfilled the geographical connection of its title and created circumstances for the founding of Birmingham in 1871. Pratt held stock in one of the first iron furnaces (at Oxmoor in 1863) in what became the Birmingham iron district. He and his son-in-law, Henry F. DeBardeleben, took over the postwar rebuilding effort of that furnace, incorporated as the Red Mountain Iron and Coal Company. In 1876, three years after Pratt's death, DeBardeleben and his associates made iron from Alabama coke in a fashion promising effective production, thus striking the spark that later ignited the Birmingham iron boom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>No extended scholarly treatment of Pratt's life is available. An excellent short article, citing further bibliographical sources, is Randall M. Miller, "Daniel Pratt's Industrial Urbanism: The Cotton Mill Town in Ante-Bellum Alabama," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV (Spring 1972), 5-36.

<sup>4</sup>As previously noted, the nature of the selection process for induction into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame has left the nineteenth century coal, iron, steel, and railroad industries underrepresented. Fortunately, the single best work on Alabama's business and industrial development is Ethel Armes, *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama* (Birmingham, 1910), which colorfully depicts the work and times of such nineteenth century business leaders as Truman Aldrich, Henry F. DeBardeleben, Enoch Ensley, the Noble brothers, Horace Ware, and the Woodward brothers.

The single most significant key to Pratt's success may well have been his ability to see the most promising possibility of fresh technological capability juxtaposed with geographical opportunity. The key may well have been not what he knew, which was, of course, important, but what he saw.

Our second group consists of Miller and Comer, who both experienced the Civil War as young men and established careers in the difficult postwar years. Miller was released as a Confederate prisoner of war at the age of twenty-two. Comer was a student cadet at The University of Alabama when Federal troops raided the campus in April, 1865. The sixteen-year old Comer walked home to Barbour County, where his widowed mother and five brothers held on to the family plantation. Miller, who had only the barest of education, went directly to work in his native Escambia County. Comer, already exposed to university training, completed college in Georgia and Virginia, returning to Barbour County in 1869. Both men recognized the need to break their dependence upon agriculture, but they found different paths to other enterprises.

Miller, a farmer, began producing timber as an alternate source of income. After gathering crops, he cut timber and floated it down the Escambia River to Ferry Pass or Pensacola, Florida. After selling the timber, he walked home. Two years of this process produced capital for marriage; two more years, the purchase of a small grist and saw mill; six more years, a partnership in a water-powered lumber mill on the Conecuh River; eleven more years, investment in a larger mill. Miller's tenacity and native intelligence took on added status as Northern timber sources declined and Southern yellow pine began competing effectively with the white pine and hemlock of the Great Lakes and Northwest regions. Lumber production in the South doubled between 1880 and 1890; the value of the saw-mill products of that section rose during the decade from \$40,000,000 to \$188,000,000.<sup>5</sup>

In 1899 Miller planned to retire, but he was attracted into the purchase of a large timber company and mill facility at Brewton. His decision was well-timed. An even greater boom

<sup>5</sup>See Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (New York, 1929), II, 482.

in Southern lumbering occurred after 1900. Lumbering became the largest industry in the South, employing one of every three wage earners and producing half the nation's lumber. Miller's operation became quite profitable, enabling him to invest in numerous other enterprises.

Miller's success thus appears to have been due to staying in the right place to capitalize on the demand for the natural resource that surrounded him. Still, many tried their hand at the late nineteenth-century lumber business in Alabama. Many more remained marginal farmers. Only Miller and a few others became sustained successes, bequeathing their businesses to future generations. The dominant philosophy of the time was to cut and get out, but Miller was one of the first to realize that the way to perpetuate his business was to cut only the mature trees, leaving the others to grow. Perhaps the key was that Miller was of the land that sustained him, and he cared for it.

Whereas Miller profited by staying where he was, Comer is an excellent example of the business leader, who, like Daniel Pratt, profited by willingly changing focus and by moving to where the opportunity was. After 1869, when Comer returned to Barbour County, he became one of the largest producers of cotton in the state. The price of cotton dropped steadily in the postwar years, however, and as Comer's land holdings grew, he became an absentee merchant-landlord, whose principal financial success rested in a general store and a grist mill. Comer, moreover, perceived the importance of developments in other parts of the state. By 1872 new railroad lines were providing access to the mineral wealth of central Alabama, and new industrial towns such as Birmingham and Anniston had been founded. By 1881 the iron industry was firmly established in both cities. In the meantime, the difficulties besetting agriculture mounted, and in 1885 Comer moved his family to Anniston. Although he continued to farm his land in Barbour County, Comer's energies in Anniston were devoted primarily to a wholesale grain and commission business.

Comer soon discovered that Georgia's local railroad rates were lower than those in Alabama and that he could not com-



pete with Georgia merchants. Realizing that the Georgia railroad commission had mandatory powers to fix rates whereas Alabama's commission did not, Comer advocated a stronger Alabama Railroad Commission and first entered into the controversy that eventually carried him to the governorship of the state.<sup>6</sup>

In 1890 Comer moved to Birmingham, where competing rail lines afforded more attractive freight rates. He purchased the City National Bank, becoming its president, and continued his interest in the wholesale grain and commission business as president of the Birmingham Corn and Flour Mills.

The economic depression of the mid-1890s bore down particularly hard on Birmingham, since the city dwellers could not fall back for sustenance on agriculture, itself already depressed. Wage-paying jobs were essential, and in the late 1890s Comer led in promoting a textile mill to provide jobs for the wives of the men who worked in Birmingham's iron and steel industry. In 1897 he became president of Avondale Mills, which soon became his chief business concern.

Comer personally put the business on its feet, oversaw modest expansion, and then managed the firm in concert with his son while governor (1907-11). In 1912 he borrowed \$100,000 to keep the firm moving and thereby secured majority control of the firm's stock. World War I demand made Avondale a profitable enterprise and established the base for further expansion in the 1920s.<sup>7</sup>

As with Pratt, the key to Comer's success appears to have been his vision, his sense of what was needed next, whether that need be a personal shift of location and of business focus or a statewide shift to more effective transportation policies and educational opportunities (the latter the chief feature of his governorship). The breadth and achievement of Comer's ca-

<sup>6</sup>See James F. Doster, *Railroads in Alabama Politics, 1875-1914* (University, Ala., 1957) and *Alabama's First Railroad Commission, 1881-1885* (University, Ala., 1949).

<sup>7</sup>On the twentieth-century textile industry, see Louis Galambos, *Competition and Cooperation: the Emergence of a National Trade Association* (Baltimore, 1966). Alabama's textile history is relatively unexplored.

reer, the manner in which his key moves capitalized on overall patterns in Alabama's history, his ultimate success as one of the beleagued Civil War and Reconstruction generation, all suggest the need for a carefully done and searching biography.

Our third group consists of the honorees born between 1860 and 1878. Four realized success through trade, two through nondurable manufacturing, one through durable manufacturing, one through banking, and one through real estate. Of these nine leaders of the immediate post-Civil War generation, five were associated with the development of Birmingham, one with Tuscaloosa, one with Alexander City, one with the forests of south Alabama, and one with Troy, a late nineteenth-century mercantile distribution point for southeast Alabama.

Charles Henderson moved from a small farm as a child to Troy, where his father operated a general store. In 1877 he left Howard College (located in Marion) upon the death of his father and at the age of seventeen entered the family business with his two brothers. In 1886 he was elected mayor of Troy; in 1888 he opened the first wholesale grocery in the area. By 1900 he could retire from active management of business affairs to devote time to investments and public service. He formed a telephone and telegraph company in 1904, a bank in 1906, and an electric power company in 1913. A venture into textile manufacturing proved unsuccessful. He served six terms as mayor of Troy, in several capacities on the staffs of governors of the state, as state railroad commissioner (1906-14), and as governor (1915-19).<sup>8</sup>

No dramatic event explains Henderson's success. His mercantile establishment profited from Troy's geographical position at the end of existing rail lines of the day, and his retention of elected office testified to his ability to win confidence and to his perseverance and initiative. Twenty-three years as a local businessman and political leader preceded his achieving statewide prominence.

The career of James Greeley McGowin parallels somewhat that of his fellow Escambia County lumberman, T. R. Miller.

<sup>8</sup>See Margaret Pace Farmer, "Governor Charles Henderson," *Alabama Review*, IX (October, 1956), 243-50.

McGowin's father was one of two brothers out of seven who survived the Civil War. Young McGowin attended a few rural schools but spent most of his youth helping his father operate a small farm, store, blacksmith shop, and lumber mill. With that experience and a few weeks of business school in Lexington, Kentucky, McGowin opened a mercantile business in Brewton in 1892 in partnership with a brother-in-law. In 1903 he moved to Mobile to join with two brothers in the lumber exporting business. Two years later the three McGowins and another brother-in-law purchased the W. T. Smith Lumber Company in Chapman in Butler County. McGowin moved to Chapman as general manager. In 1907 McGowin's firm merged with a neighboring mill, thus establishing a practice of expanding by acquiring other operations and thereby becoming a firm that stayed with the land rather than cutting it over and abandoning it. By 1925 when McGowin became company president, a number of other firms had been so acquired. The lumbering challenges facing McGowin following World War I differed from those facing Miller, who had died in 1914. Many Southern timber industries began to suffer in the 1920s as old timber ran out, not yet replenished by reforestation. McGowin diversified and used all possible lumber for crates, barrels, boxes, and veneers. His firm thus weathered the Great Depression.

According to the McGowin family, the firm's key move was the first acquisition of another company in 1907. Had that acquisition failed, as it almost did, the prospect was that the young firm might have been but one of many "cut and get out" operations with new land. McGowin's firm could plan cutting operations for a number of years in the future. McGowin's determination, reflected in many aspects of his life, and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances in the lumber industry appear to be personal success factors.<sup>9</sup>

At about the same time that McGowin was developing his

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<sup>9</sup>Forest History Society, comp., *James Greeley McGowin — South Alabama Lumberman: The Recollections of His Family* (Santa Cruz Calif., 1977). Comment on the acquisition of the Dunham Lumber Company in 1907 is found on p. 32. A full history of Alabama's lumber industry remains to be written, but see John M. Collier, *The First Fifty Years of the Southern Pine Association, 1915-1965* (New Orleans, 1965).

career, Benjamin Russell was building a successful career in the textile industry across the state in Tallapoosa County. Russell's family had moved from a farm to nearby Alexander City in 1884 when Ben was eight years old. Russell began work immediately, sweeping out a furniture store, then selling, running errands, and keeping books at a local bank, and then (in 1894) publishing a successful monthly magazine for the Southern Philatelic Association, which he had organized. He financed in part his education at the University of Virginia by managing the college yearbook and newspaper. A brief stint as a lawyer in Birmingham ended in 1900 when his father died, and he joined his brother and sister in selling the family mercantile business and in starting a bank. Russell soon turned to textiles, organizing a company which purchased a nearby knitting mill, moving its machinery to Alexander City, and leaving the banking business to his brother. After an initial year of deficit operation, Russell sold a local telephone company he had organized and repurchased the stock others had bought in the knitting mill. In 1908 he added a spinning operation.

In 1912 the turning point in Russell's career occurred. Realizing the advantages of hydroelectric power over steam, Russell had acquired in 1911 a dam site and flood rights on the Tallapoosa River, five miles east of Alexander City. The Alabama Power Company claimed prior flood rights. After extensive negotiations, Russell sold his unfinished dam and obtained a power line into Alexander City and reduced electrical rates, thereby placing his firm in strategic position to meet all competition.

Russell's business expanded. By 1926 his enterprises included three mills in Alexander City, and he decided that he was creating more employment for women than for men. Reversing a common procedure (one that had led Comer into the textile industry, for example), Russell created jobs for the husbands of many of his employees by establishing in 1926 a foundry in Alexander City to manufacture sewer pipe. Between 1927 and 1931 Russell created an integrated network of textile facilities for processing raw cotton to finished cloth products. Russell realized that the South had long suffered from the consequences of producing low value-added goods

only one step removed from raw products. Many Southern textile mills, for example, produced "grey goods" that were sent to Northern factories for bleaching, dying, and conversion into finished cloth. Russell added a weaving mill and bleaching mill to his operations and sought to develop better grades of cotton through research and experimentation on his own farm lands, distributing the improved seed to farmers all over Alabama. In the early 1930s Russell turned more responsibility for his enterprises over to his three sons and devoted even more of his attention to his community and to his state.

As the Russell family's history has been entwined with Alexander City, so has the history of the Moody family been entwined with Tuscaloosa. Frank Maxwell Moody was the third generation of his family to engage in the banking business in Tuscaloosa and the fifth generation of his family to dwell there. Moody attended local schools, worked in the dime store and in his father's bank as a youth, and compiled an outstanding record in athletics and academics at the nearby state university. Upon graduation in 1897 he became a messenger and junior clerk with the First National Bank of Tuscaloosa. One might erroneously assume that his path was thus assured in the family business; Moody's experience was more real than assumption. Each day after work in the early years, he mounted a horse and rode about the countryside selling insurance to supplement his salary. From this endeavor came a partnership in an insurance firm. In 1921 Moody became president of the bank upon the death of his father. For the next two decades, he advanced his banking firm and served in various positions of local and state civic and professional leadership and upon the boards of numerous corporations. Unlike Comer and others who advanced their careers by moving to new opportunities, Moody represented another kind of leader who found his place in standing by his local community in every trial, in spite of opportunities offered him in Birmingham, New York, and Washington.

The careers of the other five inductees representing the immediate post-Civil War and Reconstruction generation were all associated with the city of Birmingham.<sup>10</sup> They represent

<sup>10</sup>The most recent study of Birmingham is Carl V. Harris, *Political Power in Birmingham, 1871-1921* (Knoxville, 1977), which contains a bibliographical essay on other sources.



a range of interests.

By the mid-1880s the development of Birmingham entered a new phase when the success of its pioneer coke furnaces prompted the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (TCI) to begin furnace development in the city. One of the founders of TCI was Alfred Montgomery Shook.<sup>11</sup> When TCI moved its corporate headquarters to Birmingham in 1892, Shook's son, Paschal Green Shook, came with it as a stenographer to the firm's general manager.

Young Shook had spent his youth in Tracy City, Tennessee, TCI's company town, where he learned stenography working for his father during summer vacation from school. In his first job with the Southern Iron Company of Chattanooga, a firm organized by his father, he gained valuable experience in steel manufacturing, and his work in TCI's headquarters in Birmingham furthered his business knowledge and experience. In 1896 TCI's president asked him to investigate the prospect of making steel in Birmingham. Shook visited Northern steel mills and prepared a perceptive report recommending the construction of open-hearth furnaces in Birmingham. Shook assisted his father in the building of the new plant as secretary-treasurer of the TCI construction subsidiary and became assistant general superintendent of the operating facility. The first steel was produced on Thanksgiving Day, 1899.

For two years Shook continued his work with TCI, but in 1901 as a result of the purchase of that company and subsequent reorganization Shook and many other officers lost their positions. Shook and another former TCI officer then established a manufacturer's agency selling to coal mine and electrical utility operations. By 1910 the company began mining ore, and in 1913 Shook's younger brother, James Warner Shook, bought out the older Shook's former partner. Warner Shook's mining experience enabled the firm to expand its mining operations to coincide with World War I demand for iron products.

Shook's subsequent civic contributions endeared him to the Birmingham community. His business success hinged on

<sup>11</sup>See Armes, *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, 360-93.

his ability to make perceptive use of the contacts afforded him early in life and his ability to turn the loss of a corporate job into an opportunity for personal entrepreneurship.

Whereas Shook had the advantage of influential contacts early in life (by no means a guarantee of success), Louis Pizitz began in this country without much money, contacts, or ability to speak English. Pizitz, a native of Poland, studied for the rabbinate and then taught school and manufactured woolen goods. The Russians who ruled the area in which he lived, however, initiated a series of restrictions and oppressive tax policies designed to eliminate Polish Jews, and in 1889 Pizitz became one of the large number of immigrants to this country from Eastern Europe. For three years he lived as a peddler in New York, then moved to the area around Macon and Swainsboro, Georgia. He accumulated enough capital to open a general merchandise store in Swainsboro, but the panic of 1893, the resulting depression, and the lure of a developing metropolitan center drew him to Birmingham in 1897. With a few hundred dollars he rented a small building on First Avenue North and opened his store with eight employees. Birmingham was a growing city, and Pizitz's close attention to business and his reputation for fairness brought him customers and friends. By 1937 his store had 74 departments and 600 employees. His humanitarianism was legend.

Another who capitalized on Birmingham's growth was James Franklin Rushton. The Rushton career was built on a simple need in a warm climate: ice.<sup>12</sup> Rushton's father, William, was a merchant in Columbia, Tennessee, when Frank was born. The elder Rushton needed some means of preservation for large quantities of perishable goods, but at that time, manufactured ice was unknown in the South and in its infancy elsewhere in the nation. Sometime in the late 1870s William Rushton noted a circular from a Chicago company which manufactured ice machines. He promptly went to Chicago and returned the owner of one of the first ice-making machines in the South. In his search for wider opportunities for his unique machine, William Rushton noted the potential of Birmingham, where he put an ice machine in operation in

<sup>12</sup>See Oscar E. Anderson, Jr., *Refrigeration in America: A History of a New Technology* (Princeton, 1953).

1881, thus marrying fresh technological capability to geographical opportunity.

Frank Rushton grew into the business, starting as an oiler in an engine room and serving an apprenticeship in all departments of the factory before joining with his father in the management of factories in numerous cities in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. After the elder Rushton died in 1922, Frank expanded the business further, adding coal mining and distributing operations which enabled him to retain employees year round. Frank Rushton is remembered not only for his abilities as a businessman, but for his leadership of civic and charitable endeavors.

Another commercial opportunity somewhat unique to Southern needs is the soft-drink industry.<sup>13</sup> Crawford Toy Johnson founded the Birmingham Coca-Cola Bottling Company in 1902, after arranging with friends a dealership franchise from Asa Candler, owner of the Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta. By effectively marketing his product, Johnson profited from Birmingham's growth in the early part of the twentieth century. Johnson took the lead in testing new items — the "hobble skirt" bottle and the forerunner of the six pack take home carton, for example — and was the organizer and first president of the Coca-Cola Bottlers' Association. During the depression of the 1930s he introduced red metal vending machines to replace barrel and tub coolers.

Johnson's particular skill was that of grasping significant innovation possibilities, particularly in marketing. His original decision to secure a bottling franchise appears to have had no basis in previous experience or ambition. His father was a college professor of English, not a businessman, and Johnson held various jobs after graduating from the University of Mississippi, settling temporarily in Chattanooga as a deputy clerk in the U.S. District and Circuit Court. Once in the bottling business, however, Johnson displayed a knack for keep-

<sup>13</sup>See John J. Riley, *A History of the American Soft Drink Industry: Bottled Beverages, 1807-1957* (Washington, D.C., 1958). The Coca-Cola Company has published *The Coca-Cola Company: An Illustrated Profile* (Atlanta, 1974), but the firm's chairman of the board points out in that book's preface that "it is by no means a final or complete account."

ing his product fresh before the public.

The last of our sample of business leaders born in the immediate post-Civil War and Reconstruction years represents a

commodity always in demand: real estate.<sup>14</sup> Robert Jemison, Jr., was born in Tuscaloosa, the descendent of West Alabama pioneer business entrepreneurs. As did so many others, Jemison's father moved his family (in 1884) to Birmingham during the town's initial boom period. Bob Jemison began his business career in 1899 as a hardware store clerk. Four years later he launched his own real estate and insurance company with \$5,000 capital and a one-room office. In less than a decade his real estate developments had made a major mark on the city. His foresight in developing the prestigious and widely admired Mountain Brook area in the late 1920s, when many thought it too far from the business district to be successful, is particularly noteworthy. After his investments laid the base for his affairs, Jemison devoted even more of his time to civic and charitable endeavors, time freely given even before his business was fully established. Jemison's keys to success appeared to be vision and willingness to take a risk.

Our fourth group consists of the honorees born between 1881 and 1889. Birmingham was much less important to their careers than it had been to the group born in the previous decade. Only one inductee of the seven born in the 1880s is primarily associated with the business life of Birmingham.

Thomas Wesley Martin was a pioneer in providing the state with electrical power.<sup>15</sup> Martin's father moved the family from Scottsboro to Montgomery when young Martin was eight years old. His father served as attorney general of Alabama from 1889 to 1894, and Martin trained for the law at The University of Alabama. He entered law practice with his father

<sup>14</sup>Joseph A. Walton, *History of the Mobile Real Estate Association* (Mobile, 1959) represents a beginning in an area that has hardly been touched, even by the growing interest in urban studies.

<sup>15</sup>See Thomas W. Martin, *Forty Years of Alabama Power Company, 1911-1951* (Birmingham, 1952) and Adrian G. Daniel "J. W. Worthington, Promoter of Muscle Shoals Power," *Alabama Review*, XII (July, 1959), 196-208; and "The Origins of Muscle Shoals Power, 1896-1906," *Alabama Review*, XV (October, 1962), 253-61.

in 1901 and continued the development of a successful practice after the elder Martin's death.

Meanwhile, several corporations seeking to develop the hydroelectric potential of the Tallapoosa and Coosa rivers in East Alabama faced several difficulties. Their formation, for example, often produced complex legal questions concerning navigation and flood rights. A second difficulty was the ownership of flood rights by a number of corporations on the same river. No company could build a large dam without flooding the dam site of another group further upstream. These difficulties created a third: attracting investors.

Leadership and consolidation were needed. Martin helped supply them after James Mitchell, a Canadian who had worked with electrical development in Brazil and in the United States, persuaded him in 1912 to join the Alabama Traction, Light and Power Company, Ltd., a holding company under the laws of Canada. Martin was instrumental in working out agreements with Benjamin Russell of Alexander City and with a Montgomery group that had earlier built a power site on the Tallapoosa. These consolidations permitted the development of Alabama Power Company, the operating component of Mitchell's holding company. The first power facility — on the Coosa River — went into operation in early 1914.

In 1915 Martin opened the way to securing critical expansion capital. Property owners adjacent to the company's Coosa River reservoir filed suits, known as "mosquito suits," claiming that backwaters created by the new dam had increased the mosquito population and the number of cases of malaria in the area. At Martin's urging, Major General William Crawford Gorgas, famous for his work in clearing the Panama Canal zone of infectious mosquitoes, demonstrated to juries that the breeding places of disease-bearing mosquitoes were in small pockets of water on the properties of those bringing suit, not in the power company reservoir.

Martin became a vice-president of the company in 1915, when expansion accelerated to North Alabama. In 1920 he became president, a post he held until 1949. Martin's career demonstrated his capacity to recognize the need for the next



step in a complex situation and his willingness to take that step.

As Martin's career was built on capitalizing on shifts in the nature of energy production, the career of Joseph Linyer Bedsole was built on adapting to changing trade conditions. As Alabama's agriculture shifted from its antebellum orientation, country crossroads storekeepers became key sources of credit. The shift was abetted by the changing transportation system, which led rural populations to move from old river communities to new railroad towns.<sup>16</sup>

Bedsole's family moved to Thomasville in late 1898, where his father opened a store. Bedsole attended a small business college in Montgomery and worked there as a shoe salesman and bookkeeper before moving to Shelby County as a bookkeeper at the Calera Iron Works. In 1902 he returned to Thomasville and joined the family business. During the financial panic of 1907, Bedsole instituted the practice of cash or thirty-days credit in lieu of the crop-lein system and turned to dry goods rather than groceries and hardware. By 1913 he had developed a true department store.<sup>17</sup> As a local civic leader, he played a key role in diversifying the economic base of the Thomasville area: organizing several nail keg factories to make use of pine wood unsuitable for high grade lumber; developing a hog and sheep industry; and establishing a yard for purchasing scrap iron to capitalize on the World War I demand for iron.

In 1919 Bedsole moved to the burgeoning port of Mobile, where he organized and became president of a wholesale drug corporation. In the succeeding years he expanded his store in Thomasville and built a chain of department stores in southern Alabama and Mississippi. In 1928 he joined with other wholesalers across the nation in merging with the McKesson and

<sup>16</sup>Antebellum southern merchants have been studied in Lewis E. Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, 1949). Study of the role of merchants in Alabama's local economic development after the Civil War is needed.

<sup>17</sup>The development of southern department stores and chain stores has not been studied thoroughly. Frank M. Mayfield, *The Department Store Story* (New York, 1949) and H. Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution, and Economics* (London, 1954) are of some use.

Robbins Drug Company, for which he became southeastern district vice-president.<sup>18</sup> From these bases he moved into land and timber investments and varied other enterprises and became a distinguished civic leader in Mobile.

Ben E. May came to the forests of South Alabama from Atlanta as a teenager seeking summer employment. He learned to grade hardwood, and after one year of college at the Georgia Institute of Technology he moved to Mobile in 1907 to aid his older brother in managing a lumber mill. He soon began buying cut-over land with the idea of reforestation, but the key to his business career came in slightly different form. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914 immense amounts of flour were being shipped from Gulf Coast ports to England in metal walled vessels which, upon encountering the cold water of the North Atlantic, produced condensation. The moisture spoiled the flour. The solution was wood-lined hulls. May's fortune was made in supplying wood, retaining title to it, and selling it in timber-short England. At the age of twenty-six May was a wealthy man. He invested in land in southwest Alabama, Florida, and California and became involved in many other businesses. In addition, he was renowned within the health services community as a patron of medical research.

Whereas May's business career hinged on one key circumstance, the career of Ed Leigh McMillan represents a type more common to the business generation that matured in the twentieth century. After obtaining a law degree in 1910, McMillan returned to Brewton; married his childhood sweetheart, the daughter of T. R. Miller; and began the practice of law. In early 1914 he became a legal advisor to the T. R. Miller Mill Company. Marriage brought him into an already successful business, but ability determined his sustained record of leadership, first as legal advisor, then as board member, secretary-treasurer and attorney, and finally (in 1950) as president. As with May and others inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame, McMillan's record of civic and charitable contribution was also significant.

As a college trained corporate executive, McMillan's ca-

<sup>18</sup>See Paul C. Olsen, *The Merchandising of Drug Products*, (New York, 1941).

reer also indicates the reason for Lee Bidgood's selection as a business leader. Bidgood, born on a farm in rural Virginia, was educated at the University of Virginia. He came to The University of Alabama in 1912 to develop studies in economics and business and soon advocated the establishment of a college of commerce. Such was done in 1920, with Bidgood as pioneer dean of the college. In 1920 Bidgood's school became the first — and for forty years thereafter remained the only — business school in Alabama accredited by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business.

Harry Mell Ayers was born in Anniston, the son of a journalist who turned to medicine and became the first Southern Baptist medical missionary to China (in 1901). Upon his return from China in 1903 young Ayers took up the earlier path of his father as journalist. He established and edited the school newspaper while at Jacksonville State Teacher's College. Upon graduation he became a reporter for the Anniston *Evening Star* but was fired because his free-lance articles brought him an income greater than his editor's. He then became a reporter for a rival paper, the *Hot Blast*, was promoted to city editor, and finally purchased the paper. In 1913 he bought the *Evening Star*, merged the two papers, and created the Anniston *Star*. By the 1920s Ayers was one of the state's leading political journalists, a role he played for more than fifty years.<sup>19</sup>

John Cecil Persons represents an area of business, finance and banking, that became increasingly important as Alabama's economic development moved from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> Persons was born in Atlanta, one of six children. After his father's death, he held several jobs as a young boy, becoming a bookkeeper for a meat packing firm in 1903. That firm transferred him to Birmingham. His talents brought him promotions, but in 1909 he quit his job to study law at The University of Alabama. He served the school as bursar-registrar and became its treasurer upon graduation. He also entered law practice in Tuscaloosa and

<sup>19</sup>The history of journalism as a business enterprise in Alabama remains to be written. Louis O. Brackeen, *History of the Alabama Press Association, 1871-1951* (Auburn, 1951) provides an introduction.

<sup>20</sup>See Margaret E. Armbruster, *John C. Persons: Citizen-Soldier* (Birmingham, 1974).

bought an interest in a lumber company. After distinguished service in World War I, he returned to Tuscaloosa, incorporated two new lumber companies, and became a loan officer for First National Bank of Tuscaloosa.

In 1927 he moved to Birmingham to join Traders National Bank, later merged to become American Traders National Bank, and later still (during the Great Depression) merged with First National Bank, Birmingham's largest financial institution. During those years he continually proved his business abilities. An officer in the Alabama National Guard, he commanded the 31st Division in combat during World War II. After the war, he became chief executive officer of First National and led that institution until his retirement in 1958.

Our fifth group consists of inductees born in the 1890s. Further evidence of the increasing importance of finance and banking to Alabama's twentieth-century development is the fact that four of these six, who represent the state's business leadership in the post-World War I period, built their reputations in banking and insurance. Two of them lived in Birmingham, another in Huntsville, and another in Dothan. The other two inductees are a Mobile transportation figure and a Tuscaloosa paper manufacturing executive.

Mervyn Hayden Sterne was born in Anniston but came to Birmingham in 1909 as a stenographer to the president of Traders National Bank. In 1916 he resigned from the bank and formed M. H. Sterne and Company, specializing in stocks and bonds. Service in France during World War I temporarily interrupted his business career, but upon his return to Birmingham he joined with former city mayor, George B. Ward, in the firm of Ward, Sterne, and Company, a dealer, underwriter, and distributor of securities offered by government and industry. Between 1926 and 1930 Sterne's firm played a key role in the series of mergers (mentioned earlier in connection with Persons' career) that joined Traders National Bank first with American Trust and Savings Bank and then with First National Bank. Rucker Agee and Edmond Leach also joined the firm, today known as Sterne, Agee, and Leach, Inc.

Sterne and his partners were pioneers in financing schools

through the issuance of three-mill tax school warrants. In the 1920s the firm purchased state-issued road bonds when no other bids were submitted and took the initiative in placing county road paving programs. Over the years Sterne's company and its syndicates have handled a substantially larger portion of the state's bonds than any other investment banking company.<sup>21</sup>

Sterne again served in the armed forces during World War II. His civic and charitable contributions were also numerous.

Frank Park Samford was another Birmingham financial figure. Samford, a native of Troy and a graduate of Auburn Polytechnic Institute, was the grandson of an Alabama governor and the son of a prominent Montgomery attorney. His early career included stints as an insurance salesman and as a farmer, but his life-long career really began in 1921 when he and his cousin, Robert P. Davison, took over the insolvent Heralds of Liberty, a fraternal benefit society, incorporated in Alabama but doing business from an office in Philadelphia. Samford and Davison were determined to move the firm to Birmingham and convert it to a legal reserve life insurance company. These were difficult objectives, demanding resolution of the society's complex affairs in Philadelphia, protection of existing policy holders, and development of agents qualified to sell regular life insurance. The move to Birmingham came in 1927. In early 1929 the firm became Liberty National Life Insurance Company, a legal reserve life insurance firm.<sup>22</sup>

The early 1930s were difficult years. In 1931 Samford persuaded company officers to sell industrial insurance (a term describing the collection of life and burial premiums in small, weekly payments) on a permanent basis. He developed pro-

<sup>21</sup>Ralph Draughon, "Some Aspects of the History of Alabam Bond Issues," *Alabama Review*, VI (July, 1953), 163-74, is a needed introduction to the subject. William H. Brantley, *Banking in Alabama, 1816-1860* (Birmingham, 1961) has no post Civil War counterpart, and a comprehensive financial history of Alabama remains to be written. For national context, see Vincent P. Carosso, *Investment Banking in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970) and Benjamin J. Klebaner, *Commercial Banking in the United States: A History* (Hinsdale, Ill., 1974).

<sup>22</sup>See Frank P. Samford, *The First Seventy-One Years of Liberty National Life Insurance Company* (Birmingham, 1971).



fessional well-trained agents capable of selling various types of insurance, and he devised a new type of contract to attract such agents. In 1933 the firm showed a profit and in 1934 Samford succeeded Davison as president, a post he held until 1960.

Samford's company became a \$100 million company in 1941. Two years later Liberty National purchased Brown Service Insurance Company, a large firm specializing in burial insurance. This acquisition, probably the most important event in Liberty National's history, launched the firm's transition from a small combination company writing basic weekly and ordinary coverages to a large multi-line company engaged in ordinary, industrial, group, pension, trust, health, disability, income, hospital, and major medical coverages. In 1960 Liberty National became a \$200 million company. By the time of Samford's death the firm was one of the twenty largest stock life insurance companies in the country.

Wallace David Malone, Sr., was educated in the Dothan public schools and at Sewanee Military Academy and The University of Alabama. In 1916 he enrolled in the Harvard School of Business Administration, but when the United States entered World War I, he volunteered for the Army and served in France. Upon his return to Dothan he became manager of the Dothan Guano Company. In 1932 he bought that firm's outstanding stock (controlling it until 1955) and soon became a cashier in the First National Bank, of which his father was president. In 1939 he succeeded his father as president and chairman of the board. He served as president for ten years, then and thereafter investing in various other enterprises and playing an active role in state politics.

Marion Beirne Spragins of Huntsville followed a career pattern similar to that of Malone. He was educated in private schools in Huntsville and in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and at The University of Alabama. He began his banking career as a bookkeeper in the First National Bank of Huntsville, of which both his grandfather and father had served as director and president. World War I interrupted his career; he was commissioned in the field artillery and served in France. In 1920 he became a director of the bank, serving in that capacity for

the next fifty-three years, almost one-half of the entire history of the bank. In 1935 he succeeded his father as president and held that post until 1963. Spragins was widely noted for his expertise as a banker, but his reputation in his native city was also founded upon his leading Huntsville's post World War II industrial expansion, particularly the development of the space industry.<sup>23</sup>

Another business leader important to the post World War II development of his city was Edward Aubert Roberts of Mobile. Robert's career echoes that of Pratt, Miller, Pizitz, McGowin, Persons, May, and Stern, who achieved much from humble beginnings. Roberts attended University Military School in Mobile and Auburn Polytechnic Institute, leaving the latter school to work for John Waterman, who in 1919 organized the Waterman Steamship Corporation.<sup>24</sup> Roberts was Waterman's first employee, working by day as a cargo checker and by night as a shipping clerk. After early struggles with a handful of ships to establish a record of reliability, the firm was designated the Federal government's sole operator at the port of Mobile in 1924. Three years later, Roberts became vice-president and opened the corporation's first branch office in Memphis.

The firm's big opportunity came in 1930. Under provisions of the Merchant Marine Act of 1928, designed to encourage the construction of modern carriers by offering subsidies in the form of "ocean mail contracts," Waterman purchased fourteen ships. The firm added other ships over the next several years and secured a number of exclusive contracts. In 1936 Waterman turned the presidency over to Roberts. By World War II, Roberts headed the largest privately owned steamship line in the nation. The port facilities developed by Waterman, Roberts, and others resulted in Mobile's having one of the greatest population increases in any city in the nation during World War II. Roberts played a prominent role in wartime ship production and after the war became the behind-the-scenes leader of Mobile's effort to accomodate growth.

<sup>23</sup>Studies of how Alabama's cities reacted to post World War II growth would be beneficial to growth policy questions currently facing the state.

<sup>24</sup>An economic history of the port of Mobile, to include firms such as the Waterman Steamship Corporation is needed.

In 1946 Roberts founded Southern Industries, a holding company controlling a diversified combination of operating companies. In 1953, when Roberts shifted his primary attention to Southern Industries by resigning as chairman of the Waterman corporation (he remained a director), the latter firm was an \$80 million business. By 1964, when Roberts died, the assets of Southern Industries exceeded \$28 million, compared to \$1.9 million in 1946.

The final inductee born in the 1890's to be noted is the only woman thus far honored by the Alabama Business Hall of Fame. Mildred Westervelt Warner was born in New York but lived her early life in Indiana, where her father owned and operated a wrapping paper mill. In 1902 her father patented a machine that produced a paper bag that could be opened with a flick of the wrist and "would stand on its own bottom." The E-Z Opener Bag was the key to Herbert Westervelt's opening of additional bag factories in New York and Mexico. In 1915 Mildred Westervelt married Herbert D. Warner, a municipal judge, who joined her father's firm as secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Warner served as assistant to her father.

The firm established plants in Texas and Louisiana between 1912 and 1919. In the late 1920s following Mississippi River floods in 1922 and 1927, the Westervelt family sought a new site for consolidating their principal manufacturing facilities.. They selected Tuscaloosa on the Black Warrior River close to both timber and coal resources. The Tuscaloosa mill went into production in 1929 as Alabama's first modern paper manufacturer. The corporate name was changed to Gulf States Paper Corporation. Mildred Warner was executive vice president; in 1938 she succeeded her father as president. In less than ten years after the reorganization of the company and the move to Tuscaloosa Mrs. Warner had freed the company of debt. During World War II she brought professional forestry into the organization and afterwards led an expansion effort. By 1950 Gulf States Paper supplied almost one of every five grocery bags and sacks in the nation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See David C. Smith, *History of Papermaking in the United States (1691-1961)* (New York, 1970). There is no comprehensive history available of paper-making in Alabama.

Our final grouping consists only of James Craig Smith, the only business leader born in the twentieth century inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame in its first five years. His experiences, however, generally paralleled those of the honorees born in the previous decade, with the exception of World War I, for which he was too young. Smith's mother was the daughter of B. B. Comer, whose career as governor of Alabama and founder of Avondale Mills has been previously noted. Smith, however, initially sought to be a journalist upon his graduation from Virginia Military Institute in 1925. After working briefly as a reporter for the *Selma Times-Journal*, he began his long career with Avondale Mills.

Governor Comer personally trained Smith in the tasks of weighing and grading cotton. Smith next became the firm's chief buyer, traveling through the South. He rose up the corporate ladder through a succession of offices, becoming president and treasurer in 1951 and holding those offices for nineteen years. He expanded and improved his company and became a national spokesperson for the textile industry. In the latter capacity he held a number of national offices in textile trade associations. During his presidency of Avondale Mills, company sales more than doubled, six new mills were constructed, and the firm became the world's largest producer of ticking and cotton carded and combed knitting yarns.

On reflection, studies of factors in business success and changing relative opportunity to attain it have tended to make the point that the opportunity to achieve business success (measured by corporate title) in "rags-to-riches" fashion was lessened in the twentieth century. Whereas native intelligence and ground-floor business opportunity made it possible for nineteenth-century figures to achieve rather dramatic success, family standing and advanced education have become prerequisites in the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup>See John G. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago, 1968); Richard M. Huber, *The American Idea of Success* (New York, 1971); William Miller, ed., *Men in Business: Essays in the History of Entrepreneurship* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952); C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York, 1957); Moses Rischin, ed., *The American Gospel of Success* (Chicago, 1965); Richard Weiss, *The American Myth of Success* (New York, 1969); and Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America* (New Brunswick, N.H., 1954).

The business careers of the twenty-six leaders here studied support in part that generalization. The earlier one of these leaders was born, the more likely that person's career was launched from a relatively inauspicious start. Shook born in 1872, is the first whose father could be said already to have achieved significant business success. Rushton's father became a business leader after Rushton was born (1876) but before the son became an adult. After about 1876 as a birthdate, the likelihood increases that an inductee was born into reasonably secure business circumstances. Bedsole (1881), Bidgood (1884), Persons (1888), May (1889), Sterne (1892), and Roberts (1898) had relatively little paternal business success to inherit, but the other ten inductees born after 1876 were born into established business families. This factor is particularly true of the seven whose careers were in finance, banking, insurance, and real estate. Even in these fields, however, each considerably advanced the status he inherited. To make the point of this paragraph is not — as is too often assumed — to state that each's success was circumstantial. Many have squandered an inheritance.

In searching for factors explaining success, investigators often probe origins, educational backgrounds, and similar characteristics of their subjects. Most of the businessmen honored by the Alabama Business Hall of Fame were native Alabamians (see Table 1) of rural and small-town backgrounds. The majority were college educated. All had early experience with work and responsibility; most briefly experienced with possible career choices. As a group, they were not visibly active in politics (Pratt, Comer, Henderson, and Malone being exceptions). Almost without exception, these leaders were affiliated with traditional organized religious groups.

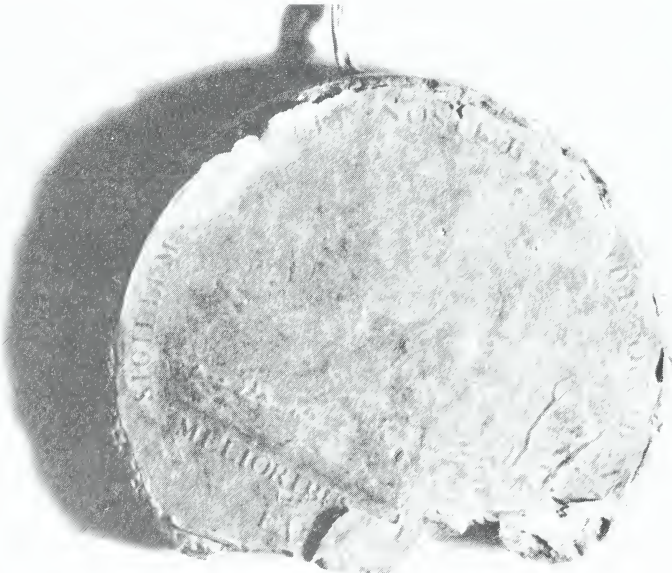
Almost without exception, also, these business leaders were highly visible in civic and charitable endeavors. Indeed, these contributions probably played the greatest role in their public reputations and ultimate selection to the Alabama Business Hall of Fame, aside from their attaining success as businessmen.

In conclusion, the twenty-six business leaders herein surveyed represent a diverse group, but not excessively so. They



generally illustrate the culture from which they sprang: rural and small-town, progressively but moderately urban, oriented toward religion and family, educated in native institutions, concerned about their communities and their state and practicing a civic ethic in their willingness to devote time to public service, often in undramatic fashion. Luck played a part in the rise of many, but it was luck capitalized upon by diligence and vision. Only May could be described popularly as an "overnight success." Risk-taking apparently became less important over time as a success factor, but few, if any, of these leaders could be classified as excessively cautious businessmen. A few exhibited flamboyance but on the whole they were not in the forefront of public attention. Their social concern was applied traditionally, which now draws the criticism of the post 1960's perspective; it is difficult to gauge the extent and effectiveness of behind-the-scenes activity on social issues.

One therefore may study these careers toward learning the "secret of success" with disappointing results. No encompassing fagic formula can be found other than the usual prescriptions: industry, initiative, perserverance, commitment and perceptive personal use of educational and other opportunities that arise. The lesson perhaps is less in debates over what created success (how much credit should be given to whom under what circumstances) or how to achieve it then in answering why these leaders are judged successful by their peers in viewing their careers in retrospect. The common denominator apart from position in business is demonstrated concern for a community broader than each's own business endeavors. The fact that characteristic looms large in the selection process is as much a comment on the values of the nominating committee as upon the careers of the leaders they honor.



## A BETTER FATE! THE BRITISH WEST FLORIDA SEAL

by

Robert R. Rea

The widely scattered and woefully incomplete records of the colonial period of Alabama history are often a source of great frustration. It is, consequently, cause for real scholarly excitement when new or hitherto unnoticed evidence comes to light. It is particularly gratifying when the process of recovery involves a conjunction of interests among friends and fellow searchers with differing specialities, working in neighboring states.

A recent issue of *The Alabama Historical Quarterly* contained an article describing the official seal of British West Florida and noting the author's unsuccessful search for a surviving specimen of this curious historical artifact.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, through the good offices of Dr. Jack D. L. Holmes of Birmingham, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Don Sharp of Metairie, Louisiana, who had also searched widely, but in vain, for a copy of the seal. Happily, Mr. Sharp's association with the St. Tammany Historical Society led to information regarding an extant copy of the seal, and a picture of it was published in *The St. Tammany Historical Society Gazette*.<sup>2</sup> In March, 1981, I had the pleasure of visiting Mandeville, Louisiana, as a guest of the Society, and studying the seal which was formerly attached to a land grant issued to William O'Brien in 1776, and is now preserved in the parish archives. As the West Florida seal is known to Alabamians only by virtue of the sketch made by Benjamin Wailes and reproduced in Peter J. Hamilton's *Colonial Mobile* and Dunbar Rowland's *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763-1766, English Dominion*, a few comments based upon observation of the physical evidence may be appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Robert R. Rea, "The Deputed Great Seal of British West Florida," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XL (Nos. 3 & 4, Fall and Winter, 1978), 162-168.

<sup>2</sup>Vol. IV (March, 1980), 7.

<sup>3</sup>The author is most grateful to Mrs. Amos E. Neff for the privilege of studying the seal, and to Dr. S. Harvey Colvin, Jr., for the accompanying photographs.

The surviving seal measures four and one half inches (11.3 cm) in diameter and three quarters of an inch (1.3 cm) in thickness. The St. Tammany example retains the original paper covering the wax, both front and back, and is now light brown in color. The edges of this seal are badly worn, and roughly one eighth of the lower portion is missing — apparently broken off quite some time ago. The ribbon string which attached the seal to the document is in place, and an accompanying fragment of paper may be identified as a printed form issued at Pensacola.

The impression on the reverse or “royal” side of the seal is remarkably well preserved, sharp and legible; that on the obverse or “colonial” side is less distinct — only a few details are clear. In general, the St. Tammany seal verifies the accuracy of Wailes’s work and suggests that he sketched from a well-preserved model. The flaws in his drawing (when checked against design descriptions, examples of other contemporary British colonial seals and the St. Tammany seal) are rather more technical than substantial.

The most noticeable differences appear on the reverse side of the seal. In reality, the crown is taller and more rounded than pictured by Wailes. The right foreleg of the lion is flexed upward, rather than downward; the base of the tail is thicker; the mane falls straighter, for the beast’s posture is more erect. The unicorn appears slightly larger than in Wailes’s drawing; it wears a collar, and its right rear leg is angled from the body quite differently.

The obverse face of the St. Tammany seal is disappointingly empty, save for the appropriate lettering and the vague representation of two trees on the far right of the intended scene. Both the motto and the identifying legend are quite clear. Assuming that the engraver did in fact inscribe a view of “a cultivated County interspersed with Vineyards and Corn Fields,” his work must have been so shallow or so fine that it failed to make any significant impression when applied to the paper covering of the wax.

The St. Tammany seal provides clear evidence that the abbreviations in the legends on both sides of the seal were

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properly separated by a dot or single stop centered in the line of lettering. Wailes's sketch is incomplete and incorrect in regard to this feature of the seal.

The discovery of one survivor of the British occupation of the Gulf Coast inspires hope that others may be found through the continuing efforts of interested parties.



## WOMEN IN MEDICINE AND THE ISSUE IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY ALABAMA\*

by

Bill L. Weaver

and

James A. Thompson

The presence today of women in medical school classes, on hospital wards, and as fully-trained physicians is a fact that is often inadequately appreciated. For, in fact, a struggle was necessary to overcome the myopic vision and mistaken beliefs which pervaded in the United States in the nineteenth century regarding whether or not women were equipped for careers in medicine and thus whether they should be permitted to train for such careers. Although the arguments used for and against women as physicians were probably quite similar throughout the nation, it may be instructive to note how the issues were addressed at the state level, as well.

### I. *Women in Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*

The nineteenth century was an era when the roles of women were clearly defined. Although these roles were ever undergoing modification — being far less restrictive at the end of the century than at the beginning — they were restrictive throughout the era and were, to a large extent, based on a misconception of the nature of women. Whether the misconception that appeared in medical literature and was supported in the medical community was developed and endorsed honestly or whether it was derived from a desire to maintain the existing social order — social control of women — remains an unanswered question.<sup>1</sup>

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\*The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Howard L. Holley, M.D., Anna Lois Waters, Professor of Rheumatology, School of Medicine, University of Alabama in Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup>Martha H. Verbrugge asserts that, "Influenced more by social norms than by scientific knowledge, medical theories reinforced America's ideology and uncertainty about true womanhood." "Women and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century America,"

During the nineteenth century some women in the United States sought to train themselves for more than hearth and home and to enter professions heretofore occupied primarily by men. The professions which women sought varied, but the responses by most of the male and much of the female population were uniform and predictably negative. Some women, especially in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, chose to enter the field of medicine — not as midwives as traditionally had been open to them but as physicians. No doubt some of these women receive moral reinforcement from the extant women's rights movement and its rebellion against the accepted view of women's place in society.<sup>2</sup> In addition to its assertion of every woman's right to enter her chosen profession, the women's rights movement insisted upon equal educational opportunities as a God-given right. It was consistent, therefore, with the spirit of the women's rights movement that women interested in medicine as a career seek admission to "regular" medical college,<sup>3</sup> institutions which subscribed to traditional training and, in keeping with that tradition, admitted men

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*Signs* I (Summer, 1976), 960. For a powerful contention of the social control interests of male physicians, see Ann D. Wood, "The Fashionable Diseases: Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer, 1973); Regina Morantz, "The Lady and Her Physician," in Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner, eds., *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York, 1974); Linda Gordon, "Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of the Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the United States," *Feminist Studies* I (Winter-Spring, 1973); Barbara Ehrenreich and Diedre English, *Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness* (Old Westbury, New York, 1973); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles E. Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American History* LX (September, 1973) 332-356.

The traditional interpretation is found in numerous locations, including J.B. Blake, "Women and Medicine in Ante-Bellum America," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* XXXIX (1965); Francis R. Packard, *History of Medicine in the United States*, (New York, 1963) II; and Kate Campbell Hurd-Mead, *Medical Women of America: A Short History of the Pioneer Medical Women in America and of a Few of Their Colleagues in England* (New York, 1933).

<sup>2</sup>For analyses of the woman's rights movement in the late nineteenth century, see: William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: A History of Feminism in America* (Scranton, 1972); Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975); and Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (Garden City, 1965).

<sup>3</sup>In the nineteenth century there were several types of "irregular" institutions — hemeopathic, eclectic, hydropathic, etc. — purporting to be medical schools.

primarily or exclusively. To feminists, the issue of admission of women to medical school was another test of the strength of the women's rights movement at large, and, unfortunately, their support probably contributed somewhat to the intensity of the opposition which women applicants faced.

In support of their requests for admission to medical schools and to the medical profession, women pointed with pride to their historic role as midwives, while emphasizing the importance of medical care of women *by* women if female modesty was to be respected and maintained. They insisted that they had played a crucial role as midwives in areas of the country without the services of physicians, but they sadly noted that, as medical schools began to offer training in obstetrics and gynecology, male physicians had increasingly restricted the activities of midwives, except in the remotest of geographical locations.<sup>4</sup>

Further, advocates of the admission of women to medical schools complained that Victorian standards of morals and modesty virtually prohibited nineteenth-century women from discussing their gynecological problems with and having them treated by male physicians.<sup>5</sup> It is safe to say, therefore, that many gynecological problems remained untreated largely because of female modesty. Because of the belief that many gynecological problems were preventable, the personal hygiene

<sup>4</sup>Interestingly, at the same time that they were seeking admission to medical schools in the United States, institutions were being established and programs developed in England to train British women exclusively as midwives. Jean Donnison, "Medical Women and Lady Midwives, A Case Study in Medical and Feminist Politics," *Women's Studies* III (1976), 230. In a sense, women in the United States were seeking comparable work to that planned for British midwives, but American female medical aspirants were not amenable to being restricted to midwife duties alone.

<sup>5</sup>There is abundant evidence that many women in the nineteenth century avoided medical attention for serious conditions or concealed much from male physicians because of embarrassment. See: Richard Harrison Shryock, "Women in Medicine," in his *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Baltimore, 1966); Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female Animal"; and Blake, "Women and Medicine in Ante-Bellum America," 102. Referring to conducting gynecological examinations of females, one nineteenth-century Alabama gynecologist alluded to female modesty when he said: "This can best and most satisfactorily be accomplished by anaesthetizing the patient, which overcomes any embarrassment, prevents pain and relaxes the abdominal muscles." Wyatt Heflin, "Recent Progress in Gynecology," *The Alabama Medical and Surgical Age* VI (August, 1894), 458.

movement had been founded in the 1840s, and, as an outgrowth of this movement, modifications in female diet, dress, and exercise had been initiated.<sup>6</sup> Also, the movement led to the formation of physiological societies to dispense medical information to women by women with recognized training in the field. The low calibre of men who went into medicine and their lack of sensitivity toward their female patients further convinced women of the need for female physicians.<sup>7</sup> With these needs firmly in mind, a few women sought to enter institutions to acquire medical training.

What a few women desirous of entering the medical profession believed themselves capable of doing and what the medical community — admittedly almost totally male — and most of the male and female population saw as their capabilities were at great variance in the nineteenth century. Although the first female student had been admitted to a "regular" medical school in the 1840s, progress throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century toward opening the doors of medical schools to qualified women was uneven at best.<sup>8</sup> There is apparently little evidence regarding the opinions of

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<sup>6</sup>Contingent upon the expansion of women's knowledge about their anatomical and physiological make-up was the contention that better informed women would be able to minimize their gynecological problems and would be able to recognize their medical problems in earlier stages. Of course, the latter contention presumed that once women recognized their gynecological problems they would have the problems cared for by physicians, most of whom were male.

For a discussion of the female hygiene movement, see Richard H. Shryock, "Sylvester Graham and the Health Reform Movement, 1830-1870," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XVIII (September, 1931), 172-83.

<sup>7</sup>During the mid-nineteenth century many states licensed physicians after only two terms of lectures and frequently at second-rate proprietary schools, at that. Shryock concludes that the low calibre of medical schools and the low calibre of students they attracted had a direct bearing on the "extraordinary boorishness displayed by some student groups toward the first women who attended hospital clinics." Shryock, "Women in Medicine," 188.

<sup>8</sup>Medical colleges opening their doors to women in the 1840s were: Geneva Medical College (New York), Northwestern University (Chicago) — though this decision was soon rescinded; in the 1850s, Western Reserve (Cleveland), Graefenberg Medical Institute (Alabama); in the 1860s, University of California, University of Michigan; in the 1870s, Syracuse University; in the 1890s, The Johns Hopkins University, Cornell University, and Tulane University. For brief descriptions of some — though not all — of these events, see: Elizabeth Bass, "Pioneer Women Doctors in the South," *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association* II (December, 1947), 557-58; John Duffy, *The Healers: The Rise of the Medical*

medical school administrators in the nineteenth century on the issue of the admission of female applicants.<sup>9</sup> However, much evidence regarding the opinions of physicians in general regarding the nature of women and the basic incompatibility of women with intellectual pursuits is available in the proceedings of medical society meetings and in various other items of the popular and scientific literature of the era.<sup>10</sup>

Physicians, troubled over the potential entrance of women into the medical profession, fought the movement by (1) derogating "irregular" medical schools which had been receptive to women as students; (2) condemning newly-established female medical schools; and (3) utilizing scientific and pseudoscientific findings to explain why women were unsuited for medicine. Although a few male physicians were supportive of females as physicians, most certainly were not, and those who were supportive tended to be ostracized by the remainder of the medical brotherhood.<sup>11</sup>

In the nineteenth century, "irregular" medical schools, in need of funds and perhaps eager to attack "regular" medical schools, admitted women to their classes. These institutions were under constant attack from "regular" institutions because of their inadequate facilities and the poor training that they provided. Therefore, the fact that such dubious institutions

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*Establishment* (New York, 1976), 276-77; and Shryock, "Women in Medicine," 190.

A few southern women found their way northward to seek educational opportunities not available in the South, and a few northern women trained in the North migrated to the South and engaged in medical practice. The first southern woman to receive a degree from a southern school was Louisa Shepard, who received her degree from the Graefenberg Medical Institute, which had been founded in Dadeville, Alabama by her father in 1852. Bass, "Pioneer Women Doctors in the South," 557.

<sup>9</sup>If there are institutions that have in their archival collections correspondence of their deans in the nineteenth century, a fascinating study of the responses to women's inquiries and applications could be carved out.

<sup>10</sup>Such works are described in Vern Bullough and Martha Voght, "Women, Menstruation, and Nineteenth Century Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* XLVII (January-February, 1973) and Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal."

<sup>11</sup>For example, those male physicians in Philadelphia who taught courses at Women's College found themselves left on the periphery of the Philadelphia medical community.



were receptive to women applicants provided little credence to women's contention that they should be admitted to "regular" medical schools. Medical societies excluded graduates of these "irregular" institutions, and thus the standing in the medical community of their graduates, male or female, remained low.

The hesitancy of all-male medical schools to admit women led to the establishment in the last half of the nineteenth century of medical schools exclusively for women.<sup>12</sup> Most of these schools were short-lived, lasting only until the all-male institutions began regularly to admit women. By the end of the century, with the need for these female institutions greatly diminished, all but one, Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, had vanished. Most male physicians considered graduates of women's medical schools to be inferior, and, as a result, protracted battles were fought in medical societies over whether graduates of female medical schools were eligible — and, no doubt, capable — of consultation in medical cases.<sup>13</sup> The medical community in the last half of the nineteenth century felt comfortable in destroying the credibility of "irregular" medical schools, but as the debates indicate, physicians were somewhat less comfortable in discrediting female medical colleges.

The most troubling aspect of the whole question of women in medicine, however, was yet to be resolved — the establishment of a sound basis upon which to refuse women admission to "regular" medical schools. According to the conventional wisdom of the era, medicine was no place for a lady, therefore,

<sup>12</sup>Medical schools exclusively for women were established in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and New York. Altogether, nineteen schools were established between 1850 and 1895. By 1900, however, the only remaining female medical college was that in Philadelphia. Shryock, "Women in Medicine," 190; Duffy, *The Healers*, 276.

<sup>13</sup>The American Medical Association addressed the question of female membership for the first time in 1868, and this question was raised numerous times thereafter. In 1876, the AMA received, though with some misgivings, a female delegate from Illinois, but the national society did not admit women until 1915. Duffy, *The Healers*, 275. For a discussion of this issue, see Martin Kaufman, "The Admission of Women to Nineteenth-Century American Medical Societies," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Summer 1976) and Cora Bagley Marrett, "On the Evolution of Women's Medical Societies," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* LIII (Fall, 1979).

only a few male physicians felt the need to explain why women should be denied admission to medical schools and to the medical profession. Yet, physicians were under some self-imposed pressure for they were thought to be above petty jealousy. As a result, a few physicians thought it necessary to explain their opposition to women in medicine. To do so, they employed scientific and pseudoscientific arguments purporting to demonstrate that the confinement of women to hearth and home was appropriate and consistent with female anatomical and physiological capabilities. Historical opinions vary on the extent to which the scientific evidence was influenced by social conditions and on the extent to which those who used these "scientific" arguments knew them to be more descriptive of how things were than interpretive of how things ought to be.<sup>14</sup> Although there is little doubt that "scientific" results were tempered by the social milieu of the scientist, it is not clear, as some historians have argued, that the "scientific" treatises

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<sup>14</sup>According to Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "would-be scientific arguments were used in the rationalization and legitimization of almost every aspect of Victorian life, and with particular vehemence in those areas in which social change implied stress in existing social arrangements." Thus, according to the same authors, "men hopeful of preserving existing social relationships, and in some cases threatened themselves both as individuals and as members of particular social groups, employed medical and biological arguments to rationalize traditional sex roles as rooted inevitably and irreversibly in the prescriptions of anatomy and physiology." Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," 332-33. "When the belief structure of the physician is threatened," says Bullough and Voght, the physician "often uses his medical expertise to justify his prejudices and in the process strikes back with value laden responses which have nothing to do with scientific medicine." "In retrospect," continues these authors, "it does seem that the nineteenth century physician grew somewhat more shrill in his emphasis on the stability of the female at the very time that women and their male allies were challenging the old stereotypes." Bullough and Voght, "Women, Menstruation," 66, 81.

There was, no doubt, an element of concern among male physicians over economic competition from women in the field. Shryock, "Women in Medicine," 187. For gynecologists this concern became more real as the first female physicians graduated, entered gynecology, and immediately attracted an overwhelming number of female patients. Kaufman points out that the vast majority of female physicians did specialize in gynecology and settled in cities. Kaufman, "Admission of Women," 257.

No doubt, social inertia played its part. Physicians had always been men, and men and women alike experienced considerable difficulty in adjusting to the idea of female physicians. According to Kaufman, in opposing the entrance of women into medical societies, male physicians emphasized the social aspects of medical societies and insisted that members ought to be able to determine their social companions. Kaufman, "Admission of Women," 253.

about women in the nineteenth century were prepared as a further means of controlling female victims by male oppressors.<sup>15</sup> Although the preponderance of male physicians opposed the entry of women into medicine, it is worth noting that the women's cause was supported by a few male physicians.

## II. *The Issue in Alabama in the Late Nineteenth Century*

The medical community of the state of Alabama in the late nineteenth century faced the issue in much the same way as medical communities in other states. Between 1870 and 1900 the issue of medical training for women was specifically addressed four times at the annual meeting of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama. Three of the speakers, Drs. Job S. Weatherly, Benjamin Hogan Riggs, and Paul DeLacy Baker, were predictably opposed to women in medicine, but one, Dr. Ruffin Coleman, favored the higher training of females for medicine and other professions.

Job Sobieski Weatherly was born in 1828 in Bennettsville, South Carolina.<sup>16</sup> He "read" medicine under Dr. Alexander McLeod at Bennettsville, but, after two years of study, he went to New York, where he became a private pupil of Dr. P.A. Aylett and a student in the medical department of the University of New York. Weatherly completed his medical training in 1849 and returned to the South, engaging in medical practice in Adairsville and later Palmetto, Georgia.

Weatherly's Alabama career began in 1857 with his move to Montgomery. In 1862 he accepted an assignment placing him in charge of the Confederate Army hospital in Shiloh. Soon after his return to Montgomery, he was appointed medical purveyor of the department of the Mississippi. He was later

<sup>15</sup>For a discussion of male physician/female patient relationships, see Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th Century America," *Social Research* XXXIX (Winter, 1972) and previously mentioned articles by Wood, Morantz, and Gordon. We're inclined to agree with Verbrugge who admits that sexual oppression has been a powerful factor in medicine and society but argues that to see it as the primary force oversimplifies history. "Women and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century America," 961.

<sup>16</sup>Emmett B. Carmichael, "Job Sobieski Weatherly," *Journal of the Medical Association of Alabama*, XXXIII (May, 1964), 340-43; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, 1921), IV 1735-36.

assigned to Savannah, Georgia, but resigned due to illness in the family and return to Montgomery.

His medical activities in Montgomery involved private practice and an enduring interest in local, state, and national medical organizations. He was one of the organizers of the Montgomery Medical and Surgical Society in 1866 and served three terms as president of that organization. Weatherly was instrumental in reactivating the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, which had been suspended during the Civil War. The Montgomery physician served in several capacities in that organization. He was one of the first representatives from southern states to serve as a delegate to the American Medical Association meeting after the Civil War. Only two years after the return of southern representation to the A.M.A., Weatherly was elected as its vice president. Ironically, in 1871 Weatherly presided at an A.M.A. session in which the issue of female membership in the organization was hotly debated. His long and illustrious medical career came to an end in 1891 with his death at the age of sixty-two.

Benjamin Hogan Riggs was born at Mobile in 1838, but his family moved to Selma in 1845.<sup>17</sup> He was educated at Barton Academy, at the completion of which he studied medicine in the office of two Selma physicians, Drs. A.G. Mabry and James Kent. This study was followed by attendance at lectures at the University of Louisiana in New Orleans and at the Mobile Marine Hospital. Riggs received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1859. He was engaged briefly in practice in Wilcox County, but with the outbreak of hostilities, he entered the Confederate Army, rising to senior surgeon of his brigade in the Army of Tennessee. At the close of the war, Riggs returned to Selma where he practiced medicine until his untimely death in 1888 at the age of forty-nine. He served as president of the State Medical Society in 1884.

Paul DeLacy Baker was born in Abbeville District, South Carolina in 1829.<sup>18</sup> Little is known of his education beyond

<sup>17</sup>Owen, *History and Dictionary*, IV, 1439; T.A. DeLand and A. Davis Smith, *Northern Alabama, Historical and Biographical, Illustrated* (Chicago, 1881), 681-82.

<sup>18</sup>"The Grand Roll of Honor," Department of Archives and History of the State of Alabama, Montgomery, Alabama.

the fact that he received his medical degree at the Medical College of Georgia in 1854. His whereabouts between 1854 and 1862, when he entered the Confederate Army, is unclear. He served as a surgeon in the C.S.A. until the end of the war, and he entered private practice in Eufaula. His medical association activities included the presidency of the Barbour County Medical Society, Counselor of the State Medical Association, and Orator at the State Medical Association meeting in 1880.

Little is known of the early life of Ruffin Coleman, other than the fact that he received his medical degree from the University of Nashville and Vanderbilt University in 1869. He began his Alabama medical practice in 1875 in Athens, where he remained for three years. In 1878 or 1879 he left Athens and moved to Holly Springs, Mississippi, and apparently from there to Clarksville, Mississippi, returning to Alabama in 1888. Coleman practiced in Birmingham until 1892, when he apparently left the state.<sup>19</sup>

Alabama physicians who opposed female higher education and entrance into medicine did so by expressing concern over: (1) attempts by women to abandon their "natural sphere" in pursuit of learning and seek a career in another; (2) the loss of women's moral influence and the corruption of them by participation in the rough-and-tumble activities of society; (3) the disastrous effects which women's competition in the work place would have upon their modesty, gentility, and femininity; (4) the strain which entrance into higher learning and the professions would place on women's mental, physical, and emotional capabilities; (5) the damaging effect which women's competition in society would have on the benevolent desire of men to protect them; and (6) the undue influence of the women's rights movement that thrust women into a competitive field which they had had no historical interest in entering.

By nature, according to much of the thinking in the nineteenth century, women were fitted for domestic activities involving home and family, and it was a violation of that "natural" tendency if they chose a professional career. Further-

<sup>19</sup>*Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1875-1899).



more, these "natural" characteristics were thought to have a deeply-rooted biological basis.<sup>20</sup> In fact, this may not have been so much the way women were as the way men wanted them to be. And if it was the way most of them were, it may have been more the result of an indoctrination process than a "natural" tendency.<sup>21</sup>

Concern for women's appropriate sphere was evident in Alabama. In 1870, in a florid oration and apparently with reference to the physicians' wives in the audience, Dr. George A. Ketchum, President of the Alabama Medical College at Mobile, complimented women who, "*acting in their own prescribed sphere*, [italics ours] and employing the agencies suited to the delicacy and capabilities of their sex," did much to brighten scientific meetings.<sup>22</sup> It is, of course, quite possible that no sort of limitation on women was intended by his choice of words, though the implication is there. Only two years later, speaking before the same group, Dr. J.S. Weatherly questioned any role for women which took them out of the home. Insisting that any woman entering the field as a general practitioner was going beyond her sphere, he asked: "Can a practitioner of medicine fulfill her duties as wife and mother . . . ?" He added that he believed no woman to be fulfilling her destiny who is not a wife and a mother.<sup>23</sup> Somewhat later, Dr. Ben-

<sup>20</sup>The literature on the inherent weakness of women is absolutely overwhelming. In addition to the bibliographies of previously mentioned articles, see John S. Haller, Jr., and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, 1974). Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg point out that late nineteenth-century women physicians failed to share the alarm of their male colleagues when contemplating the damages of coeducation. "No one . . . worked harder or in unhealthier conditions than the washerwomen; yet, would-be saviours of American womanhood did not inveigh against this abuse — washing, after all, was appropriate work for woman." Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," 342.

John Duffy has noted numerous concerns over the damaging effect of mental strain on females' physical condition. Duffy, "Mental Strain and 'Overpressure' in the Schools: A Nineteenth Century Viewpoint," *Journal of the History of Medicine* XXIII (January, 1968), 72-74.

<sup>21</sup>See, Duffy, "Mental Strain," 63-79. Witness, for example, the woman on the frontier who filled a role quite unlike that portrayed in nineteenth-century popular literature and yet maintained her maternal instincts and her sexual identity.

<sup>22</sup>George A. Ketchum, Annual Oration, *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1870), 213-214.

<sup>23</sup>J.S. Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1872), 68.

jamin Hogan Riggs observed that civilization had invested the female with "peculiar sanctity, and lovingly contemplates her as the mother and mistress of the house," adding, "that civilization which confines woman to the home circle and the church is the best and highest."<sup>24</sup> The import of women's departure from their "natural" sphere was addressed by Dr. Paul DeLacy Baker, who expressed a grave fear that admission of women to the field of medicine would become, in his words, "the gateway through which the exodus will pass out into highways and byways which lead to the ultimate *decensus Averni*."<sup>25</sup> A woman's place, he contended, involves laws of nature which can never be violated with impunity. Woman was, therefore, "as perfect in her sphere as man . . . in his," but out of it, either one is "a failure and a monstrosity." In the final analysis, it was argued, woman should remain in her "sphere," having due regard as she should, "to her destiny and the proper relation which she should sustain to society and home."

Dr. Ruffin Coleman saw the issue quite differently. The slavery of women to purely domestic duties and the near-worship of females, he noted, had fostered generations of housewives and social queens in the South, but with environments changed, women had to become more active as breadwinners.<sup>26</sup> No longer could the post-Civil War South afford to maintain the Southern woman on a pedestal. Domestic activities would continue to be expected of the Southern woman and, according to this physician, there was no reason why female mental development should prevent women from engaging in domestic activities. On the contrary, one domestic activity — the rearing of children — would be enhanced by the educated woman's opportunity of passing her culture on to her children. The influence which women had over their children and, to some extent, their husbands, provided further evidence of their need to develop themselves to their highest mental and physical capabilities.

<sup>24</sup>Benjamin Hogan Riggs, "The New Era in Medicine," *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1878), 174-75.

<sup>25</sup>The phrase means descent into Hell. Paul Delacy Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted Into the Medical Profession?" *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1880), 193.

<sup>26</sup>Ruffin Coleman, "Woman's Relations to the Higher Education and Professions, As Viewed From Physiological and Other Stand-Points," *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Alabama* (1889), 242-44.

The contention that if women entered professions they would lose their moral influence in the world and would be corrupted in the process proved to be a powerful one. For example, Dr. Weatherly, though highly complimentary of women's moral stature, expressed concern over the likelihood that the medical woman's moral principles would be compromised and suggested that abortions would increase significantly because female doctors could not resist the appeals of fallen sisters.<sup>27</sup> This situation was only one of many compromising situations and corrupting influences which the female would encounter when she left the home and entered a profession.

The nineteenth century was, as one historian has observed, "a romantic and sentimental age, when every effort was made to render women as distinctively feminine as possible."<sup>28</sup> Certainly women's literature in the nineteenth century was replete with emphasis on femininity, subserviency, dependency, and sweetness.<sup>29</sup> There was the fear, voiced by some men, that if women studied medicine, "it would destroy those admirable qualities for which they were loved and honored."<sup>30</sup> And, it was a contention advanced by some opponents of women in professional fields that the woman in pursuit of higher education and a professional career would lose her femininity and would develop all of the manly characteristics, except those most needed — rational thinking and physical strength. Dr. Weatherly, pointing to the desirability of women remaining within the confines of traditional womanhood, insisted that a woman's strength was in her womanhood and proudly observed that Southern women were "the purest type of woman upon the face of the globe."<sup>31</sup> Emphasizing the importance of woman placing true womanhood first in their lives, he observed that "strong-minded women of history have their memories respected and loved more for their womanly failings than for their manly acts." Dr. Baker assessed women's entry into a professional career more harshly and warned that

<sup>27</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 78.

<sup>28</sup>Shryock, "Women in Medicine," 183.

<sup>29</sup>Barbara Welter, in an investigation of early nineteenth-century women's magazines, found the components of "true womanhood" to be piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* XVIII (Summer, 1966), 152.

<sup>30</sup>Blake, "Women and Medicine in Ante-Bellum America," 120.

<sup>31</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 70.

just so far as a woman advances into the masculine vocation, just that far must she leave behind her feminine nature, and men, meeting her as a competitor in the business and the struggles of life, cease to regard her as a woman; for, in effect, she has ceased to be such. In attempting to ape his qualities, she has lost her own. She has unsexed herself . . . [thus becoming] an intellectual and moral hermaphrodite.<sup>32</sup>

As he saw it, intellectuality among women naturally detracted from femininity.

In presenting a different view Dr. Coleman denigrated brute strength as important to success, observing that Alexander Pope was no Hercules, George Washington no miracle of strength, and the revered Alexander Stephens an "emaciated dwarf."<sup>33</sup> The same physician refuted the contention that the admission of women into the medical profession would assure women of "brutalizing physiques" an argument which he said was contrived to frighten the ladies themselves. To the contrary, he asserted:

I do not appreciate that one hair's breadth of this fairness will be yielded by a little wholesome labor, or a little mental elevation. I have yet to see a lady, less a lady for earning money; she forfeits not a whit of esteem, but rather gains in worthiness by earning a state of independence and self-support instead of dangling as a pensioner upon another's bounty. Such a woman must carry herself with a self-respect that no sneer can cover, or rusty dress conceal. To equal man, she need not ape him, nor necessarily grow manish [*sic*].

The loss of female modesty and gentility was no less important to those who were concerned over maintenance of the nineteenth-century woman as she was. The woman in medicine, according to some opponents, would witness and become involved in scenes destructive to her modesty, gentility, and virtue. Because women had exalted female modesty and gen-

<sup>32</sup>Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted," 198-99.

<sup>33</sup>Coleman, "Woman's Relations," 239, 241.

tility as part of their plea for the admission of females into gynecological training, they had made themselves vulnerable to the use of female modesty and delicacy as a reason for excluding women from the medical profession. Admitting that female gentility had its place in medicine, a woman's place in the sick chamber was identified as that of nurse, not doctor, because there was, as Dr. Weatherly put it, "an indescribably [*sic*] something about a woman as nurse, that is as far superior to man as Heaven is to earth."<sup>34</sup> Stated another way, suffering humanity had benefitted much more from Florence Nightingale as a gentle and ministering angel than it would have had she gone to them with probe and scalpel. Not only did society need the beneficial trait of female gentility, but the woman's family had similar needs. The woman who cast aside her femininity and gentility in order to enter a professional field was depriving herself and her potential off-spring of her special maternal skills and opportunities.

Conventional wisdom in the last half of the nineteenth century was that women were ill-suited to the rigors of medical training and practice. They were pictured as physically incapable of enduring the difficulties of medical education, and, even more importantly, as emotionally incapable of handling the pressures associated with medicine.<sup>35</sup> To illustrate these female limitations, a thorough explanation — in many cases, misexplanation — of the female anatomical and physiological make-up was undertaken. As one historian has perceptively pointed out, female physical weakness, epitomized by the sickly, frail woman periodically incapacitated by menstruation, was a condition that women were unable to deny,<sup>36</sup> although they blamed much of it on the fact that modesty prevented them from having female medical problems treated by male physicians.

A powerful argument utilized in the late nineteenth cen-

<sup>34</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 77.

<sup>35</sup>Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," 334. The prevalence of neurasthenia among women provided further evidence that women were inadequately equipped emotionally to deal with new roles for them in society. For a discussion of the problem of neurasthenia, see Haller and Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America*.

<sup>36</sup>For a fascinating description of this condition, see Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenbeg, "The Female Animal," 334-42.



ture as a justification for denying a rigorous higher education to women involved physiological maturation of women and the effect of mental exertion on the maturation process. In the view of many male physicians, women were essentially prisoners of their reproductive system, though there is some disagreement as to whether they were expected to look upon that system as anything more than a mechanism for procreation.<sup>37</sup> In some of the medical literature and in some of the marital advice books in the last half of the nineteenth century, the anatomical and physiological composition of females was explained, and implications of the composition were described. The uterus, according to those sources, was connected to the central nervous system, and shocks to the nervous system were believed to alter the reproductive cycle and the attendant emotional states.<sup>38</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, that around 1870 several medical writers proclaimed the hazards of education to the health of women, insisting that education for women was a serious mistake because it would be acquired simultaneously with the physiological strains of female puberty and ovulation.<sup>39</sup> According to these medical writers, the female

<sup>37</sup>It has been a standard interpretation for several years that the Victorian conception of women's sexuality was such that women were taught to be afraid of sex and to display an absolute lack of passion. Although there is much evidence to support the contention that nineteenth-century women were devoid of sexual feelings and drives, Carl Degler has presented formidable evidence to the contrary. Degler concludes that "the so-called Victorian conception of women's sexuality was more that an ideology seeking to be established than the prevalent law or practice . . ." He adds that: "historians need to recognize that the attitudes of ordinary people are quite capable of resisting efforts to reshape or alter them. That there was an effort to deny women's sexual feelings and to deny them legitimate expression cannot be doubted in the light of the books written then and later about the Victorian conception of sexuality." But the writings to the contrary cast doubt on the belief that the ideology was actually put into practice by most men and women in the nineteenth century. Degler, "What Ought To Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American History Review* LXXIX (December, 1974), 1471, 1490; also see Peter Gay, "Victorian Sexuality: Old Texts and New Insights," *American Scholar*, XLIX (Summer, 1980), 372-78.

Much insightful discussion of this issue can be found in Haller and Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* and in Ronald G. Walters, *Primers for Prudery: Sexual Advice to Victorian America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1974).

<sup>38</sup>Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," 335.

<sup>39</sup>The most popular of these writers, according to Bullough and Voght, was Edward H. Clarke, a Harvard professor who wrote *Sex in Education, or a Fair Chance for Girls*. Although there were those who refuted Clarke's work, the popularity of

body could not carry on two major functions simultaneously. Therefore, during the period of development of the reproductive system no other major function, such as mental concentration, should be attempted. In other words, "the girl who curtailed brain work during puberty could devote her body's full energy to the optimum development of its reproductive capacities," while the young woman who "consumed her vital force in intellectual activities was necessarily diverting these energies from the achievement of true womanhood."<sup>40</sup> Not only would woman's mental exertion and the attendant inadequately developed reproductive system cause her to produce defective children, but an imperfectly developed reproductive system would interfere with the development of the feminine character, leaving the educated woman without what one historian has called "a sufficiently feminine frame of mind."<sup>41</sup>

In Alabama, as elsewhere in the late nineteenth century, female mental, physical, and emotional capabilities were at issue, although most physicians did not publicly admit that they thought women to be mentally incapable of obtaining a higher education and entering a professional career as a physician. Dr. Weatherly, though giving token support to intellectual equality of the sexes, qualified his statement by adding that any inequality which existed could be attributed to the "physical formation of woman and to other natural causes, such as occupation, maternity, etc."<sup>42</sup> Dr. Baker somewhat hesitatingly admitted the "possibility" that women had intellectual equality with men but was careful to point out that "the faculties of the female intellect seem rather [better] adapted to the investigation of metaphysical than physical science," adding that "for judicial impartiality [;] for cold, impassive observations; for simple, calm intelligence; for unremitting and exhaustive exploration, the female mind seems comparatively unfitted."<sup>43</sup> Even less willing to accept women as intellectual equals, Dr. Riggs pointed

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his book is indicated by the fact that it went through seventeen editions in thirteen years. Bullough and Voght, "Women, Menstruation," 69.

<sup>40</sup>Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," 340.

<sup>41</sup>Bullough and Voght, "Women, Menstruation," 73. It was apparent of little significance to opponents of women in medical school that a report released in 1885 by the Massachusetts Labor Bureau indicated that there were no marked differences in health between college women and the national average.

<sup>42</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 66.

<sup>43</sup>Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted," 199-200.

out that the success of some famous female practitioners did not indicate that women were especially fitted for doctorate level training. Instead, he insisted, only at long and irregular intervals in the world's history had the female mind displayed a strength of masculine intensity.<sup>44</sup> Proponents of higher education for females could not accept the idea of inherent female intellectual weakness, though they did agree that women were more dependent than men upon intuition and emotions. Dr. Coleman sympathetically described women's decision-making machinery as "instantaneous logic, with man's cumbersome machinery of premise and syllogism omitted."<sup>45</sup> Continuing, the Birmingham physician insisted that the achievements of women in the past revealed "a glorious array of illustrious women in every walk of life that brands the imputation of her imbecility as a vile slander." Yet the common educational training in the nineteenth century, preparing women for domestic activities, constituted "a dish of intellectual pabulum that would more fit the brain of a chicken." In fact, the stifling of woman's mental development allegedly resulted in a prevalence of disorders of the nervous system. "For one case of breakdown from overwork among women," Coleman proclaimed, "there are a score from ennui and sheer inanition of doing nothing."<sup>46</sup>

It was of considerable concern to some men that nineteenth-century women were inadequately trained to rely on themselves if something should happen to the husband or father or both. "Is it not better," Coleman asked, "to train them to a noble self-reliance than to leave them to lean at chance upon any broken reed that is offered?"<sup>47</sup> Most Alabama physicians probably agreed with Dr. Baker who closed the issue by admitting that really

the question is not whether woman has sufficient in-

<sup>44</sup>Riggs, "The New Era in Medicine," 174.

<sup>45</sup>Coleman, "Woman's Relations," 244. In medicine, he mentions the success of Drs. Mary Putnam Jacobi and Grace Peckham.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>"After creation's lords have selected the best of creation's ladies, there is still a dreary residue that are left either to go through the unwomanly act of earning a livelihood, or the womanly act of perishing . . . It is a cruel respect that demands of a woman to starve merely for conformity to a false standard of feminine deportment established by society under circumstances and environments entirely at variance with the condition that confronts woman to-day." *Ibid.*, 242-43.

tellect to be a learned and skilled doctor, but whether she ought to so employ it; whether, as a *woman*, she and the *world* can afford to so dedicate it . . . .<sup>48</sup>

Obviously, it was not easy for male physicians to buttress their arguments with evidence of female intellectual weakness, although it was much easier for them to document and feel comfortable with their documentation on female physical frailties. In fact, they could do so in a paternalistic fashion of protecting women from the rigors of life in the professional world. Insisting that "Nature has fitted them more especially for patients than it has for doctors," Weatherly utilized a common argument for the era in stating that:

It is a well known physiological law that for near half the time, say from ten to fifteen days out of thirty, females are subject to nervous depression or excitation, in a greater or lesser degree, and over which they absolutely have no control, frequently unfitting them for any pursuit requiring bodily or mental toil.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, Dr. Baker viewed the entrance of a woman into the medical profession as physically antagonizing the intents of her creation, adding

that the body of woman is as definitely marked for the first care of her child as is her mind. Its rounded outline and its velvet softness tell us only of gentleness, sympathy, delicacy, and tenderness; of all those heaven-inspired qualities that fit her for the inseparable companionship of that infantile helplessness which God deemed it unnecessary to command that she should love and cherish.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup>"If the mere intellectuality of woman could be separated from her physical infirmities, and the demand which nature and her God-appointed destiny continually make upon her organization and *time*, it might be sufficient to enable her to master the scientific difficulties of our profession, or of any other; while, in ours especially, her gentle hand and her sympathetic nature might permit her to excel in all the qualifications of the healer, *particularly in such as involve the nurse.*" [Italics ours] Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted," 200.

<sup>49</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 72.

<sup>50</sup>Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted," 195.

"It is impossible," he continued, "for such a physical structure to indicate that fierceness and persistence which the hardships and dangers of the exterior world demand." Referring to the physical endurance and the emotional stress associated with a scientific education and medical practice, the same physician asked:

How can her delicate physical sensibilities, intensified by constant agumentations, endure the trials to which they must be subjected in the dissecting room? How often would the scalpel, in her silken hand, be the trembling index of her sweet ineptitude, and the blush of modesty write its interdict upon her tingling cheek?

While opponents of women in the higher professions had focused on women's physical weakness and the debilitating effects of intense mental and physical activity, proponents no doubt agreed with Dr. Coleman who suggested that "any change from the present state of woman's health and vigor would be an improvement devoutly to be wished."<sup>51</sup> This poor health, he concluded, could not be "laid at the door of violent brain culture."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup>Of the former, Coleman said that "the amount of exercise indulged in by most of our women, especially in the South, is about equal to that of the model woman described by Socrates, who filled her desires in this direction by folding up and putting away her clothes." Of the latter, he added, "'So cribbed, cabined, and confined,' with attenuated waist, and contorted feet, our noble Anglo Saxon women are growing more and more a prey to all the ills that flesh is heir to. Why whoever saw a lady run — the very idea is a sacrilege. And even when children, how stands the case? While the boy pursues the flying ball, chases the hoop, or scours the plain, the tender ship of a sister is berigged in ribbons, flounces and things, and put in the straight jacket of ponderous decorum and inactivity." Coleman "Woman's Relations," 236-37.

<sup>52</sup>M.W. Due, M.D., of Birmingham, viewed the poor health of women as largely the result of inadequate exercise and cramping style of clothes. He quoted a comment which appeared in a New York medical journal in which a visitor to the South from the North had expressed concern over the weakly and sickly condition of southern women. Due laments the structures on female activity, observing that "while yet a child she romps and plays, and is a boy so far as outdoor amusements is concerned, until the catamenial flow begins. Then she becomes shy, modest, and no longer indulges in or enjoys her former amusements. She is no longer the same being. She begins to think of dress and her mind is filled with her looks and incipient thoughts of marriage. Her physical education is entirely neglected just at the state when exercise is necessary to help nature produce a



The emotional incapacity of women for medical careers was separated neatly from their mental capabilities, though it was intricately tied to their physical frailties. Female thinking, opponents were fond of saying, was more strongly influenced by emotions than by logic. Hysteria was reputed to be second nature to women, and their ability to handle stress was certainly dubious. "In the presence of the grim monster," observed Dr. Weatherly, ". . . there is no time for hysteria, and a nervous spell on the part of the physician might be fatal to the patient."<sup>53</sup> In the eyes of most Alabama physicians in the late nineteenth century, women were physically and emotionally ill-equipped to become physicians, and their intellectual capability, though not necessarily inferior to men's was directed more toward social and maternal than scientific pursuits.

In the late nineteenth century, part of the accoutrements of woman's "natural" sphere was the acceptance of women on pedestals as objects of near worship to be protected and supported by men. It was a widespread belief that, as Weatherly phrased it, it was every man's duty to support one woman. It is not surprising, therefore, that some people were concerned when woman's occupational competition with men appeared to be succeeding in "driving away from man's heart that innate feeling of chivalric sentiment which most men feel for her."<sup>54</sup> Women were urged to "be forever the help-mate and somewhat dependent companion of man," a position with which most nineteenth-century men felt comfortable.<sup>55</sup> Why should a man desire to exist, asked Dr. Riggs plaintively, "if deprived of the assurance that the life-sustaining contrasts of woman's nature to his own shall be preserved?"<sup>56</sup> He added the touching but unheeded plea, "Oh woman, queen of our hearts, be con-

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perfect specimen." Due, "On the Physical Education of the Fair Sex," *The Alabama Medical and Surgical Age* II (September, 1890), 421.

<sup>53</sup>Weatherly, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 74-75. In fact, Weatherly was dubious of woman's ability to separate emotional responses from rational judgment — even involving so serious a subject as infanticide — especially in the face of emotional appeals by other women.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 68. Using only slightly different phrasing, another Alabama physician insisted that a professional career in competition with men would "impair the instinct of the manly heart to use his strength to defend her weakness." Baker, "Shall Women Be Admitted," 204.

<sup>55</sup>Riggs, "The New Era in Medicine," 174.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

tent with thy domain there!" As if enough had not been said already, the woman who shunned the helpmate and dependent status in favor of a career was assailed for allegedly contributing to her husband's debilitation by providing financial support that enabled him to be idle and leisurely.<sup>57</sup>

Surprisingly, some Alabama physicians, and perhaps many elsewhere as well, were oblivious to the hesitancy to admit women into professional fields and enigmatically argued that if women had been truly interested in becoming physicians they would have already done so. Presumably, the thrust of this argument — though it was not so stated — was that women were being unduly influenced by the women's rights movement.<sup>58</sup> Dr. Weatherly incredulously commented that there had been no laws prohibiting woman from studying medicine, "certainly none prohibiting her from preparing herself to practice upon her own sex," and as proof of this statement, he said that physicians were "large-minded men" who would not "entertain an unfounded prejudices for or against anything without good reason."<sup>59</sup>

During the last half of the nineteenth century Alabama witnessed the formation or continuation of five medical schools. The Medical College of Alabama, founded in 1859 and located at Mobile, continued there until 1920 when it was moved to Tuscaloosa and then ultimately to Birmingham in 1945 as the University of Alabama School of Medicine. The Medical Department at Southern University was founded in 1872 at Greensboro, where it remained throughout its eight-year existence. The Graffenberg Institute (1862-72) was founded at Dadeville, and it has the distinction of graduating the first female physician in the South. In 1894 the Birmingham Medical College was founded in the city of the same name, and it was still in existence at the turn of the century. The Montezuma Medical College, located at Bessemer, enjoyed only a two-year existence (1896-98).<sup>60</sup> No records of any of these

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>58</sup>Weatherly alluded to this issue in, "Woman: Her Rights and Her Wrongs," 69-70.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>60</sup>James A. Thompson and Michael R. Kronenfeld, "The Montezuma Medical College," *The Alabama Journal of Medical Sciences* XVI (January, 1979), 67-68; Valadimir Luketic, "The Birmingham Medical College," *The Alabama Journal of*

institutions during the nineteenth century remain, and whether women applied for admission or wrote letters of inquiry concerning admission remains a mystery. Unfortunately, the absence of records of these institutions precludes the historian from assessing the extent to which ideas and attitudes expressed in medical society meetings are reflective of the attitudes of medical school administrators.

Unfortunately for women in Alabama, as well as for those throughout the United States, few people advocated the entrance of women into the medical profession, least of all male doctors. Obviously some breakthroughs had occurred by the turn of the century, but Abraham Flexner in his report in 1910 was wrong when he said, "medical education is open to women on practically the same terms as men and that so many institutions admit women that no woman desiring an education in medicine is under any disability in finding a school to which she may gain admittance."<sup>61</sup> Under this misapprehension, it was easy for him to conclude incorrectly that the absence of increased numbers of women in medical schools was an indication of their disinclination to enter medicine. He was under the illusion that there was no longer a need for a female medical school and recommended that funding for it be terminated. Nevertheless, he did express concern that women were not being given equal intern privileges to those of men.

For decades after his now-famous report was released, the accessibility of medical schools to women which Flexner had perceived in 1910 proved to be erroneous. The admission of women to medical schools was a giant step in rising above the contention that not only was there a "natural" sphere in society for women, but that it was "natural" for *all* women. Giant steps must be taken slowly, and in medicine as in the child's game, only then after saying "May I?"

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*Medical Sciences* VI (October, 1969) 447-454; James A. Thompson and Michael R. Kronenfeld, "The Southern University Medical College," *The Alabama Journal of Medical Sciences* XVI (July, 1979), 198-200; James A. Thompson and Michael R. Kronenfeld, "Graefenberg Medical Institute," *The Alabama Journal of the Medical Sciences* XVI (October, 1979), 350-52.

<sup>61</sup>Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (New York, 1910), 178-79.

A PIONEER ALABAMA DOCTOR'S LEDGER<sup>1</sup>

edited by

Rhoda Coleman Ellison

A ledger kept by a Bibb County doctor in the early days of settlement gives some authentic glimpses into pioneer life in central Alabama. Dr. David R. Boyd<sup>2</sup> of Centreville, Alabama, in the handsome shaded penmanship of the period inscribed his name and the date January 1, 1829, on the first remaining page of a large account book formerly the property of James M. C. Wiley and now labeled Ledger A. Dr. Boyd's first entries are dated September 1828, but several items are carried over subsequently from 1826 and 1827 and one from 1824. Although Ledger A covers the years 1829 and 1830 most fully, it continues some records, especially of collections, into 1834. On the last pages a different and less legible hand makes entries for 1836, the year following Dr. Boyd's early death. Thus these accounts describe, more or less completely, around a decade of medical service in an early Alabama community.

Possibly the beginning of a new book of accounts was inspired by the transfer of much of the town's business district across the Cahaba River to its present hill location in 1829, when the third county court house was built there.<sup>3</sup> At that time seventy-eight lots were laid off around a central court house square, and their sale by the county commissioners continued until 1832. Something of the hopeful and enterprising

<sup>1</sup>This ledger is now the property of Mrs. Louise Meigs Rogan of Centreville, Alabama.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. David R. Boyd (1802-1835) was a native of Surrey County, North Carolina. He was one of the first settlers to become a land-owner in Bibb County. In 1824 in Centreville, he married Theresa Coleman, whose family had emigrated from Edgecomb County, North Carolina. Besides practicing medicine and farming, he represented Bibb in the State Legislature in 1830 and 1831. His home, completed in 1835 and now occupied by his wife's great-granddaughter, Mrs. Howard Cleveland, Jr., is said to be the oldest residence in Centreville.

<sup>3</sup>At the creation of Bibb (then Cahaba) County by the Territorial Legislature in February 1818, the county seat was located at Centreville at the Falls of the Cahaba, built principally on the west bank of the river. In 1823 county commissioners moved it nine miles east to the present Antioch community, but in 1828 other commissioners voted to return it to Centreville at its present site.

spirit of the new town must have entered into young Dr. Boyd's opening of a new ledger on New Year's Day of 1829. Around a century later this book has something to say about pioneer medical practice and the life of both the physician and the settlers he treated in the late 1820's and early 1830's.

The first interest of this volume lies in the remedies that the physician-pharmacist prescribed and furnished. Their range, of course, is quite limited in comparison with modern prescriptions. Many are still familiar in old-fashioned medicine cabinets: calomel, castor oil, Epsom salts, paregoric, blisterplaster, mercurial ointment, digitalis. Yet many others, although often known to the country doctor through most of the nineteenth century, sound quaint today, for example hartshorn (ammonia) and "sac. Saturni" (sugar of lead). For elucidation they require a pharmaceutical dictionary or, in many cases, a doctor acquainted with nineteenth century folkways.<sup>4</sup>

A present-day pharmacist on examining the entire list is impressed by the large number of medications that treat stomach disorders. A sampling of the items reveals that, besides Epsom salts and calomel, such cathartics as folio senna, cream of tartar, and *Olium Ricini* (castor oil) were frequently prescribed. So also were such laxatives as magnesia and such emetics as elixir vitriol, *nox vomica*, ipecac, and wine antimony. The popularity of Lee's Antibilious Pills was eclipsed only by that of the unidentified Bateman's Drops.

Although digestive troubles head the list, of course other ailments sent the settler to his physician, too. Prescriptions of nitre dulce probably imply kidney infection or blockage, while tincture digitalis suggests heart difficulties. To prevent the common cold, the pioneer doctor ordered gum foetid (the evil-smelling *asafetida*) to be worn in a small sack around the neck. His favorite remedy for colds was a blisterplaster, but other prescriptions included gum camphor, oil sassafras (an antiseptic for nose and throat), and a cough medicine concocted of tincture musk and opium (*laudanum*). Oil of cinnamon was thought to be a cure for colic.

<sup>4</sup>Dr. W. J. B. Owings, retired physician, and Joe Owings, pharmacist, both of Brent, Alabama, have been very helpful.



The exigencies of frontier life required Seneca snakeroot nitre for snakebites and also possibly for what was judged to be high blood pressure in a period without instruments for checking pressure. This medication was usually accompanied by a cathartic or paregoric or the popular Bateman's Drops. For malarial fever, so prevalent in this section, sulphate quinine and Peru bark, a cheap substitute for quinine, were available in Dr. Boyd's medical satchel. He administered sudorific drops to cause sweat and febrifuge powder to reduce fever. Wormseed oil, along with a cathartic or emetic, was evidently considered effective in cases of intestinal worms, which, these records show, struck the planter's wife and child as well as his slave. Balsam and nitre made a dressing for wounds and ulcers, and sprains and rheumatism were apparently treated with gum camphor or opodeldoc liniment.

Of all the medical practices common in central Alabama in the early nineteenth century the one that seems most antiquated today is probably venesection, or the letting of blood. It was still prescribed generally in that period for reducing the number of infected blood cells present during various diseases, with the purpose of allowing healthy cells to form in their place. Dr. Boyd performed venesections regularly, although his successor was given more to the art of cupping, probably dry cupping, which required the pressing of a highly heated cup against the skin rather than an incision, as in venesection and wet cupping. Sometimes both methods were used on the same patient. Most often no medication accompanied venesection or cupping, but, when it did, the prescription was often for a cathartic or paregoric, sometimes followed by anodyne drops (for pain). Venesection occasionally preceded the delivery of a baby.

The pioneer doctor, like many of his later nineteenth century successors, performed other services besides those of physician and pharmacist. He occasionally "cleansed teethe" and frequently extracted them, either in his office or on a house call. When necessary, he was a surgeon also. Dr. Boyd amputated two of a slave's fingers and dressed the wounds regularly for ten weeks afterwards. He recorded "reducing a fractured femoris" for one citizen, a process of setting the hip bone probably accomplished by means of splints in those days.

Another settler's son required his skill in setting both bones of his forearm, listed professionally as "radius and ulna." The violence of the period is reflected in the manner of times the doctor was called on to sew and dress wounds, inflicted usually on the settler himself, though sometimes on his son or, more often, his slaves.

The treatment of slaves was no small part of a physician's practice. Dr. Boyd paid thirteen visits to slaves of James B. Clarke during the month of January 1829, for such purposes as performing venesections or administering emetics, cathartics and blisterplasters. All of his five charges on Oliver Cleveland's bill for December 1829 were incurred for slaves. During the first half of 1836, his successor made fourteen calls on the slaves of A. Stoutenborough, one of which is recorded as "visit negro child through rain." Enough accounts include the item "visit negro accouchment" to raise some question about midwifery in the quarters. The term slave never occurs, of course; sometimes the personal name is given, as in "negro Nance" or "negro Sam," but more often the designation is simply "negro" or "boy."

The charges for these medications and services were predictably modest, even if consideration is given to the difference in money values a century and a half ago. They vary from twelve and a half cents for gum foetid to eight dollars for certain accouchments, including one at this fee for a slave. Venesections were usually charged at a dollar and a half. A tooth extraction cost fifty cents in the doctor's office but a dollar if performed on a house call. A "nocta visit" was fifty cents more expensive than a day call, which was usually listed at one dollar without a prescription. Even a "visit and attention for 8 hours" cost Ebenezer Leeth only six dollars. When the doctor was called on to ride his horse to a farm house that was some distance out in the country, fording creeks and possibly also either fording the river or crossing it by ferry, he expected a proportionately higher fee. Yet a round trip of sixteen miles below Centreville at night to the home of Bird Griffin, for whom he sewed up and dressed a wound and dispensed tincture of myrrh, Epsom salts with tincture opium and also one box of Lee's Antibilious Pills, cost this settler only twelve dollars. In 1836 Vardy Johnson's account included the simple entry "To ride 12 miles, \$3.00."

Yet, in spite of the modesty of the charges, bills were frequently not paid for months or years, if at all. Times were undoubtedly hard and money scarce in the new settlements in the late 1820's and early 1830's. Cotton receipts were accepted in lieu of cash, although at two cents a pound one settler had to produce a receipt for 820 pounds in 1829. Accounts were usually recorded as "paid by cash or full" or "paid by note in full," and occasionally a bill was erased by a note from another citizen. Considering the high incidence of early death on the frontier, perhaps the number of cases in which the debt was settled by the executor or administrator of the patient's estate should not be surprising. Sometimes obligations were satisfied by services. Jonathan Potts was allowed to pay more than half of his fourteen-dollar bill for medicine and such professional attentions as dressing his wounds "by halling 876 pounds from [to?] Selma at 75 [cents], \$6.59 and by storage in Selma, \$2.00." What item was hauled and stored is not recorded, but probably cotton en route to market.

Barter was common, and figured especially in delayed payments. John Tucker, who had incurred a bill of sixty-two and a half cents on December 29, 1830, began to meet the obligation on May 21, 1832, "by 1 venison Ham in part, 50¢." Barney Kornegay, whose charges for 1829 and 1830 amounted to \$3.50, came to his doctor in 1832 with sixty-two and a half pounds of beef valued at three cents a pound, producing the balance of his debt in cash. Pioneer women were able to make payments in kind, too, sometimes by their own handwork and sometimes by possessions that should have been necessities to them. Mrs. Berry, whose "fractured radius" Dr. Boyd had set, made a partial payment "by 2 pare of socks, \$2.00," although she never paid her bill in full. On the other hand, Mrs. Prudence Starling met her obligation of eighteen dollars and a half in full "by one work oxen," a transaction that must have involved a real deprivation to a widow.

Ledger A records the sale of other items besides medicine and professional services. Tobacco was sold regularly along with drugs, priced in 1828 at three pounds for one dollar. Like most other settlers, Dr. Boyd was also engaged in farming some of the new land that had been opened for sale by the government only a decade earlier, and occasionally he listed

items of his produce, some of which suggest a greater diversification in agriculture than was common later in central Alabama. In September 1829 Dr. Boyd sold to John Henry, Sr.,<sup>5</sup> two bushels of corn at seventy-five cents a bushel and four bushels of wheat at one dollar a bushel, receiving in part payment four pounds of wool at fifty cents a poynd. On Henry Potts' bill in 1830, between charges for green camphor and a cathartic there are listed three and a half bushels of seed oats at one dollar and seventy-five cents and two bushels of seed potatoes at one dollar. The versatile doctor was also enterprising enough to own a blacksmith shop, as his charges frequently indicate. He had other means of turning a penny, too. He had a load of cotton hauled for one of his patients at the fee of one dollar, and he charged another for the use of a stable at five dollars. To one patient he sold law books, possibly received earlier in lieu of cash, and to another a saddle. Still another citizen, apparently malarial, he took into his home for two days' board at one dollar a day, while he was treating him with Peru bark and quinine.

All of these early settlers, physician and patients alike, were in a struggle to survive and prosper in the difficult conditions of the central Alabama frontier. The physician was regarded as one of the means of survival, as he diagnosed illnesses and dispensed prescriptions now mostly outdated. This volume of precisely written entries is ample evidence of the dependence of the community upon him. It also permits some glimpses into the life of both patients and physician. It records not only the old-fashioned medicines and treatments relied on but, by implication, the physical ailments most commonly recognized. In this central Alabama country, where both planters and yeoman farmers settled, the record affirms the medical care that slaveholders ordered for their servants and suggests the frugality or lack of funds responsible for small farmers' barter payments. The young doctor's own struggle to survive financially and perhaps even to make his fortune is underlined by his attempts to manage both his practice and his new farming land, and also to sell, buy or barter as circumstances allowed. The period of settlement gains color and

<sup>5</sup>John Henry, Sr., was county sheriff in the early 1820's and local tavern-keeper for many years. The present Kennedy residence just off the court house square was built for him in 1837.

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human interest from the record he left in this old leather-bound ledger.



## MOBILE'S GREAT HURRICANE OF 1819

by

Jack D.L. Holmes\*

On Tuesday afternoon, July 27, 1819, "a small but intense" hurricane struck Mobile Bay.<sup>1</sup> These tropical cyclones in the Gulf of Mexico take their name, "hurricane," from the Mayan Indian god of the storm, "Hunraken." They are caused by the tempestuous clash of air from the tropic and temperate zones, and some hurricanes have affected an area as large as 200,000 square miles. Considered by meteorologists as one of the most awesome natural enemies of mankind, hurricanes generate an over-all destructive force many times that of the area-limited tornado.<sup>2</sup>

The history of hurricanes at Mobile goes back at least to 1717 when Dauphin Island was split into two parts. The eastern part retained the name Dauphin Island, while the western section resumed the original name of the whole island, Massacre.<sup>3</sup> Again, on 11 September 1722 "the force of a great

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<sup>1</sup>This author was first interested in the subject by the account in Jay Robert Nash, *Darkest Hours* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976), 375-376. In an otherwise-reliable volume on hurricanes, Ivan Ray Tannehill, *Hurricanes Their Nature and History, Particularly those of the West Indies and the Southern Coasts of the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), 232, states that the storm "hit Louisiana and Alabama" on August 25-28, 1819.

<sup>2</sup>The general description of hurricanes as tropical cyclones is contained in *ibid.*, 2-3. With air speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour, a single hurricane can generate more energy than that produced throughout the U.S. for several decades according to scientists estimates: 3.6 BILLION tons of air moving at speeds over 200 m.p.h. Fred Bayles, "Hurricanes — Important New Info Emerging," *Birmingham News*, 9 October 1977, 28-A. This article reports on "Project Stormfury," which is studying better methods of forecasting hurricanes by means of specially-computer-equipped Navy Orion and Air Force C-130 aircraft. The group is managed by Dr. Robert Sheets, Chief of the Hurricane Group for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

<sup>3</sup>Jack D.L. Holmes, "Dauphin Island in the Franco-Spanish War, 1719-1722," *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley*, John Francis McDermott, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), 103.

southeast wind" destroyed the store and damaged the contents for the Company of the Indies at Mobile.<sup>4</sup> Mobile also suffered during the American Revolution from three years of hurricanes, particularly the series of three in 1780, which are called, collectively, "The Great Hurricane."<sup>5</sup>

So, too, with the 1819 hurricane, we note that its havoc extended along the Alabama and Mississippi coasts.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately for historians, we have two excellent contemporary accounts which are the basic primary sources, plus several newspaper accounts. Dr. Ayers P. Merrill was a military surgeon with a party of U.S. troops under Captain Nathaniel Young.<sup>7</sup> The detachment was part of a larger force of Americans sent to construct a military road from middle Tennessee to New Orleans and were bivouaced in their tents some forty miles north of Bay St. Louis. Dr. Merrill was knocked to the ground by a falling tree and almost fatally wounded, but he joined the other men as they struggled through hurricane-tossed debris and flooded lowlands to the coast. His description of the hurricane is particularly valuable since he saw the destruction inland as well as on the coast.<sup>8</sup>

Another first-person account of the hurricane was provided by J.C. Moret in a survey of hurricanes on the Gulf which he sent to the noted nineteenth-century Mississippi

<sup>4</sup>"The Great Storm of 1722 at Fort Louis, Mobile," translated by Heloise H. Cruzat, *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XIV, No. 4 (October, 1931), 567-568.

<sup>5</sup>"The Three Famous Hurricanes of 1780," in Tannehill, *Hurricanes*, 145-146; David M. Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes, 1492-1870* (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1963), 66-73; *The Floridian* (Pensacola), 15 September 1821, quoting from the description of the Barbados hurricane of 1780 first appearing in *Botta's American Revolution* and the *North American Review*.

<sup>6</sup>"Mississippi with a rather short coast line, seventy-five miles, rarely experiences the eye of the hurricane. However, when the storms strike the coast of Alabama and Louisiana, high tides and winds of hurricane force also affect the Mississippi Gulf Coast." Arthell Kelley, "The Geography," *A History of Mississippi*, ed. R.A. McLemore (Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973), I, 12.

<sup>7</sup>Francis B. Heitman, *The Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S. Army* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), I, 705. Born and enlisted in Massachusetts, Dr. A.P. Merrill was a Surgeon's Mate in the 8th Infantry Regiment from 19 March 1819; Assistant Surgeon on 1 June 1821; and resigned from the service 21 September 1823. Nathaniel Young was a native of Pennsylvania who was promoted to Captain January 1, 1819. *Ibid*, I, 1067.

<sup>8</sup>A.P. Merrill, M.D., "The Hurricane of 1819," *DeBow's Review*. After War Series, V (September, 1868), 789-791.

historian, John F.H. Claiborne. Moret came to the Gulf Coast as early as 1817 and settled at Shieldsborough, "then the only sizable community at Bay St. Louis." Ludlum writes about his experience "as skipper of coastal vessels," which gives credence to his account of "all the storms, big and little, that had visited the area for half a century."<sup>9</sup> His account appears in the same issue of *DeBow's Review* as that of Dr. Merrill.<sup>10</sup>

Moret wrote about the 1819 hurricane that "notwithstanding other statements, [it] was by far the most severe and the strongest that ever blew on this coast since I came to it."<sup>11</sup> We also have contemporary newspaper accounts of the storm. "The Late Hurricane," an item appearing in the *New Orleans Gazette* of 4 August 1819, was eagerly reprinted in other area newspapers: the *Louisiana Courier*<sup>12</sup> and the *Mississippi State Gazette*<sup>13</sup> had virtually the same account based on letters from an officer stationed at Bay St. Louis to Commodore Patterson at New Orleans, and deal with the loss of the U.S.S. *Firebrand* while at anchor off Pass Christian.<sup>14</sup>

Moret described the path of the 1819 hurricane as follows: "That storm began during the night of the twenty-seventh of July, blowing first from the east, and after day-light increasing continually; at about 8 o'clock, A.M. veered to E.S.E. and latter [*sic*] to N.E. until about 11 or 12 o'clock at night, when it suddenly died away to a perfect calm for about ten minutes, then as suddenly sprang up from S.W. and for about an hour blew twice as hard as it had blown from any other points."<sup>15</sup> The so-called "eye of the storm" lasted for fifteen minutes, after which the winds picked up suddenly from the southwest, blowing very hard for about 30 minutes, and subsided gradually, so that by 12 o'clock at night there was no wind from any

<sup>9</sup>Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 136.

<sup>10</sup>J.C. Moret to John F.H. Clairborne, published as "Art. III: Storms on the Sea Coast of the Mississippi," *DeBow's Review*, After War Series, V (September, 1868), 791-796.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 792.

<sup>12</sup>*Louisiana Courier* (New Orleans), 4 August 1819.

<sup>13</sup>*Mississippi State Gazette* (Natchez), 14 August 1819.

<sup>14</sup>"The Late Hurricane," *New Orleans Gazette*, 4 August 1819, cited in Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 138.

<sup>15</sup>Moret, "Storms on the Seacoast," 793.

quarter.”<sup>16</sup>

Ludlum, an authority on early American hurricanes, after consulting the various accounts of the 1819 storm, gave the following assessment:

The wind behavior at the mouth of the Mississippi, veering from northeast to south-southeast, would seem to place the landfall just westward of the lower Delta. Moret's mention of a calm at Bay St. Louis indicated a passage over the mainland near that point. A track trending north-northeast over the lower delta, crossing St. Bernard parish, and over Mississippi Sound can be deduced from our meager reports. New Orleans remained well to the west and suffered little damage, but Mobile and probably Pensacola felt the full lash of the easterly and southeasterly blasts in the eastern sector of the storm.<sup>17</sup>

A contemporary newspaper reported that “The whole coast from Rigoulets to Mobile, to which later place only our intelligence reaches, is a scene of desolation, covered with fragments of vessels and houses, the bodies of human beings, and the carcasses of cattle.”<sup>18</sup> Dr. Merrill's graphic description tells us even more:

. . . the heavy rains uniting with the waters of the

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.* The eerie effects of the eye of the storm on people are described by William Dunbar, an early scientist from Mississippi and Louisiana, who was in New Orleans when the 1779 hurricane struck. He described the lull as follows: “it continued blowing from the East or S.E. for two or three hours with undescrivable impetuosity, after which succeeded all at once a most profound and awful calm, so inconceivably terrific that the stoutest heart stood appaled and could not look upon it without feeling a secret horror, as if nature were preparing to resolve herself again into chaos. The body became totally unelastic and a disposition was felt to abandon one self prostrate upon the ground as if despair alone at that moment, could find abode in the human mind, entirely divested of all energy.” William Dunbar, “Meteorological Observations Made by William Dunbar, Esq. at the Forest, four miles east of the R. Mississippi . . . for the Year 1800 . . . With Remarks on the State of Winds, Weather, Vegetation, &c. . . .” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, VI, (1809), 53.

<sup>17</sup>Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 138.

<sup>18</sup>*New Orleans Courier for the Country*, 4 August 1819, cited in *ibid.*, 137. Cf. “The Late Hurricane,” *Natchez Mississippi Gazette*, 14 August 1819.

sea, driven by the winds into every branch and bayou and submerging all the low lands . . . and the sea spray was noticed for more than 50 miles from the coast . . . From Pensacola to New Orleans every vessel was driven from the sea. Some few were saved by being run into the small streams and bays, but the larger portion were lost. Many were wrecked by the fury of the winds and sunk, not a few were stranded upon the coast and the island shores, and several were driven up into the pine forests and there stood for many years high and dry as mournful monuments of the storm. The loss of life was very great, few if any having escaped from the wrecked vessels. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Merrill continued with a rather macabre relation:

"The shores of Biloxi, Pass Christian, Bay St. Louis, etc., were overflowed by the rise of the sea, and when the waters subsided, numerous dead bodies of men, women and children were taken up from the beach and buried by the inhabitants. Many of these were never identified, but in some cases a ring, a bracelet or some natural mark upon the person enabled the charitable rescuers to give assurance to distant friends, of the fate of lost kindred."<sup>20</sup>

We are apprised of the extent of damage north of the Gulf shore by the same witness, who was almost killed when a tree was blown over and almost snuffed out his life. Dr. Merrill was a member of the party of some 150 U.S. troops encamped in tents upon a small stream or bayou about forty miles north of Bay St. Louis, which seemed to be the target of the killer-storm. The advent of the hurricane is detailed in Dr. Merrill's report:

The early part of the day was cloudy, and although there was little wind felt by this command in the valley when [*sic*] it was encamped and surrounded by the pine forest, it was evident from the rapid motion of the clouds that strong currents of air were passing

<sup>19</sup>Merrill, "Hurricane of 1819," 790-791. According to Nash, *Darkest Hours*, 748, the loss of life was 200, including 75 from one ship alone, *The Firebrand*.

<sup>20</sup>Merrill, "Hurricane of 1819," 790-791.



from the southeast to northwest during the day. At night there was a strong breeze through the camp, increasing gradually in force and attended by pretty copious rain. About 8 o'clock P.M., it amounted to a gale, and the tents of both officers and soldiers were swept away. This gale continued during the night, prostrating the forest trees, driving the soldiers before it, some of them to a great distance, killing one and wounded about 20 others, some of them severely.

Mentioning his own experience, Dr. Merrill wrote, "Among the latter was Surgeon Merrill, who was was [*sic*] prostrated by a falling tree and so seriously injured that his life was for a while despaired of."<sup>21</sup>

As swiftly as the hurricane roared through the camp, it appeared to abate. The contrast was great, and Dr. Merrill told of how the troops struggled through the mess to the coast:

In the morning the wind had so far abated that scattered soldiers were enabled to return to the camp, coming in one by one during the whole day. A large portion of the surrounding forest had been prostrated to the ground, and although here and there might be seen a sturdy pine standing, not one had escaped the loss of most of its branches from the violence of the storm. Large numbers of sea-birds, including every variety to be found upon the gulf coast, had been driven to this distance from the sea, and many of them much further. Some had escaped unharmed, and being exhausted and alarmed, could be approached and handled as the tamest domestic animals. But many of them, perhaps the larger number, were seriously injured and mutilated, by having been driven violently against the trees. Some were hobbling on one leg, some essaying to fly with one wing, and many were actually dead. Few of them, indeed, lived to return to their favorite haunts.<sup>22</sup>

The troops picked up their few remaining possessions and

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 789-790.

struggled through the floods and debris toward the coast. Everywhere they discovered desolation, but as they approached the Gulf, the destruction wrought by the winds increased. "The roads were obstructed by fallen timber," Dr. Merrill wrote, "so that it was with extreme difficulty that a horseman found his way." Moreover, as if to increase the trials, torrential rains combined with the wind-tossed waves from the gulf thus flooding the streams in the area. "All the streams leading to the sea," Dr. Merrill said, "were in this way changed [charged?] with salt water, and the sea spray was noticed for more than 50 miles from the coast."<sup>23</sup>

Nash, in his account of the hurricane, mistakenly reports that the U.S.S. *Firebrand* was among the many vessels wrecked at Mobile.<sup>24</sup> Actually, the *Firebrand* was far to west when it was sunk by the storm. Nash is graphic, however, when he describes the progress of the storm through Mobile Bay:

A small but intense hurricane struck Mobile . . . veering from east-southeast to northeast, destroying scores of houses and commercial buildings in Mobile and adjoining towns . . . Though its radius was small, the hurricane that lashed Mobile Bay, beginning about 8:00 P.M. on July 27, 1819, was one of the most savage to strike the American coast in the nineteenth century. . . . For about four hours the hurricane raced up the bay and through Mobile, which acted as a funnel for its brutal winds. The eye of the hurricane passed over the area at midnight, and then the wind increased from the southwest. . . .<sup>25</sup>

Ludlum thinks that Mobile endured the brunt of the storm:

The Mobile Bay area suffered more seriously than the Mississippi River section since the center of the storm apparently passed over Bay St. Louis and this would put all of the Alabama and West Florida coast in the dangerous eastern semi-circle of the storm. Turtles and alligators were washed up into

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 790.

<sup>24</sup>Nash, *Darkest Hours*, 748. See the account below.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 375.

the streets of Mobile at the height of the blow and a large brig stranded on Dauphin Street, just east of Water Street. The tide was thought to have been nearly as high as in the great storm and high water of August 1852.<sup>26</sup>

The most serious damage was undoubtedly experienced along the Mississippi coast. The schooner *Thomas Shields* capsized at Bay St. Louis with all hands presumed lost. Most of the houses at the bay were either blown away or "seriously damaged." Curiously, the loss of life was either nonexistent or minimal.<sup>27</sup>

While most coasting vessels made harbor in Bay St. Louis and escaped serious damage, the schooner *Favorite*, captain Michel Eldridge, was driven on the eastern point known as Henderson's Point, where she remained for a considerable length of time. "Several other vessels," the story ran, "were entirely lost at different places along the coast."<sup>28</sup> Moret continued his account of the destruction:

Several coasting schooners ran in the Bay of St. Louis in the "Portage," a deep cover, in the Eastern shore of the Bay of St. Louis, and there rode out the storm at anchor without any accident. The schooner "Washington," a vessel of about 80 or 100 tons, had anchored, during the night the gale began, outside of the Bay of St. Louis towards Pass Christian. She remained at her anchorage until about 9 o'clock, A.M., where she began to drag her anchors, with the wind at East, and had nearly reached the Western shore of the Bay St. Louis when the wind suddenly wearing [sic] to the N.E., she was driven, still dragging her anchors, along the shore within about 150 yards of the land, until she came to a bed in the coast, where General E.W. Ripley, had a military encampment; there her anchors, held her until night, at which time she was last seen on water. The next morning she was found bottom upwards, with her bows open from

<sup>26</sup>Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 137.

<sup>27</sup>"The Late Hurricane," *Natchez Mississippi State Gazette*, 14 August 1819.

<sup>28</sup>Moret, "Storms on the Seacoast," 793.

her deck to her keel, lying about 50 to 60 yards from the water, on the beach, over which she had been driven until stopped by the trees, at a place near where the house of James Philips now stands. Every person on board perished; some of the dead bodies were found lying from four to five hundred yards in the woods where they had been carried by the waves; no one escaped, and from the number of bodies found, it was supposed that there must have been about twenty persons on board.<sup>29</sup>

The most serious damage to ships occurred with the U.S. Man-of-War Schooner *Firebrand*. This ship, with burthen of 150 tons, equipped with twelve guns, and drawing about 11-12 feet of water, was known to have a crew of between 75 and 80 men. The commander, Lieutenant Cunningham, experienced one of those ironies of history and a fortunate absence from his ship when the hurricane struck. About three days before the storm, he had moved in a shore craft with six men and a cockswain for New Orleans, where he watched the hurricane. He and his men were the only crew members of the *Firebrand* who escaped destruction.

No one could tell what took place on board after Lieutenant Cunningham left the ship. She was seen the morning of the 29th of July, after the gale had subsided, capsized, bottom upwards, lying on "the square Handkerchief," a shoal of sand between the Mississippi and Louisiana shores, off the west end of Cat Island.<sup>30</sup> "How and when she came there," wrote Moret, "no one ever knew; the greater number of her crew were supposed to have been confined in her hull, as she lay with her bottom upward and for a considerable length of time emitted great stench, and but few of the bodies were found; some on the Western end of Cat Island, others on the shore of Bay St. Louis, and one or two, on the shore west of Pass Christian. . . ." <sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 792-793. "The Late Hurricane," *Natchez Mississippi State Gazette*, 14 Aug-  
ust 1819, reported on the incident: "There were 45 persons on board at the time,  
all of whom are supposed to have perished . . . and the dead bodies were driving  
ashore by the waves. The officers on board were Lieutenant GRAY, Doctor

Winds and waves toppled scores of buildings at Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian. Water reached six feet deep as it sloshed through Bay St. Louis and undermined the cottages. One witness could count only three buildings still standing at Pass Christian.<sup>32</sup> Loss of livestock was great. But some vessels escaped damage, as noted in Moret's experience:

On the night of the twenty-seventh of July, 1819, I was on board of a schooner named the "Peacock of Pearl River," lying in company with another schooner, "The Odd of Pear River," among the Malheureux Island, near the south-shore of the Lake Borgne, to the eastward of the place where the terminus of the Mexian [*sic* for Mexican] Gulf Railroad from New Orleans, has since been established. About 8 o'clock A.M., finding that the wind was still increasing and had wore to E.S.E., we got under weight [*sic*] by hoisting a piece of one of our sails, and ran into Pearl River, and there rode the balance of the gail at anchor in safety.<sup>33</sup>

The people in the area of New Orleans shared a common belief that the storm would do them much damage. On August 6, however, they could read in their newspaper, "with great pleasure we inform our readers that the damage has been less at the Balize than we first felt must have occurred." There was little damage to shipping there, and even less in the city.<sup>34</sup> Although the eye of the hurricane did not pass through New Orleans, there was some damage to ships at the Balize. The *Mary Ann*, which had carried news of the Latin American revolts against Spanish dominion from Venezuela via St. Thomas

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WARDLE, and messrs. PERKINS and ADAMS, midshipmen . . . at the Pass, also, only three houses were left standing: no lives, however, were lost . . . Schooner Hokee and a sloop, supposed to be the James, Daily, master, ashore at the pass of Christian."

<sup>32</sup>New Orleans, "Courier for the Country," 4 August 1819, cited in Nash, *Darkest Hours*, 375 and Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 137.

<sup>33</sup>Moret, "Storms on the Seacoast," 793.

<sup>34</sup>New Orleans *Courrier de la Louisiana*, 25 and 6 August 1819. There is no mention of the storm in Isaac Monroe Cline, *Storms, Floods and Sunshine* (New Orleans: Pelican, 1945); and Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 138, states, "New Orleans remained well to the west and suffered little damage."



to Baltimore,<sup>35</sup> was guided by Captain Selby to the Balize anchorage on July 28, 1819. She lost her anchors and cables during the storm. The *Sally-Dana*, another brig, under the command of Captain Todd, was driven close to shore, but by August 2nd, she had been repaired and was ready to set sail. One unidentified vessel tried to run before the storm, but lost its masts and spars as it was dashed to pieces on the shore.<sup>36</sup>

The *Mississippi Gazette* reported that "The hurricane . . . was sensibly felt in New Orleans, but occasioned no serious damage in its vicinity or in the city itself. Its progress appears to have been in an easterly direction through the Gulph of Mexico, from which quarter and from the Atlantic sea board, we await with painful anxiety intelligence of a most disastrous nature."<sup>37</sup> But the next day, the schooner *Flying Fish*, bound from Campeche, crossed the bar with good news for the area's citizens, which was promptly printed: "We are happy to learn," stated the *Gazette*, that much less damage was suffered at the Balize than might have been anticipated from the hurricane — The light house lost nothing but the scaffolding, which surrounded it, and which was blown down. The only vessels damaged, were the brigs Mary Ann and Sally Dana, and a ship outward bound, which lost their masts, and are ashore. . . ."<sup>38</sup>

Moret believed that with the two hurricanes of 1819 and 1821 "a greater extent of the bank along the whole coast was washed away than has been by all the storms that have taken place since."<sup>39</sup> Still, the people of the Gulf Coast, and especially those in Mobile, had reason to praise their good fortune. Although they had faced the most severe damage along the coast, they had reason to thank the fates they had been spared. They had survived a small, but intense hurricane. In the bayous of Barataria below New Orleans, Jean Lafitte and his pirate friends had special reason to rejoice: The *Firebrand* and other ships were sent by the United States to apprehend the Gulf pirate. Now they were with Davy Jones!

<sup>35</sup>New Orleans *Courrier de la Louisiana*, 25 August 1819.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 August 1819.

<sup>37</sup>New Orleans *Louisiana Gazette*, 4 August 1819, as quoted in Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 137.

<sup>38</sup>Natchez *Mississippi Gazette*, 14 August 1819.

<sup>39</sup>Moret, "Storms on the Seacoast," 794.

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